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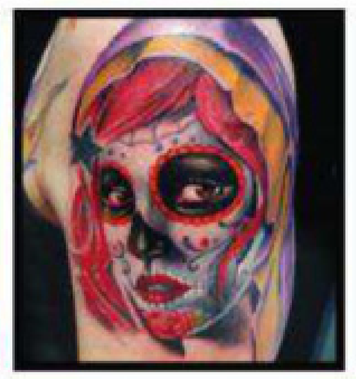
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INTERNATIONAL TATTOO ART



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Cover Photo of Nichole Towle by Bill DeMichele
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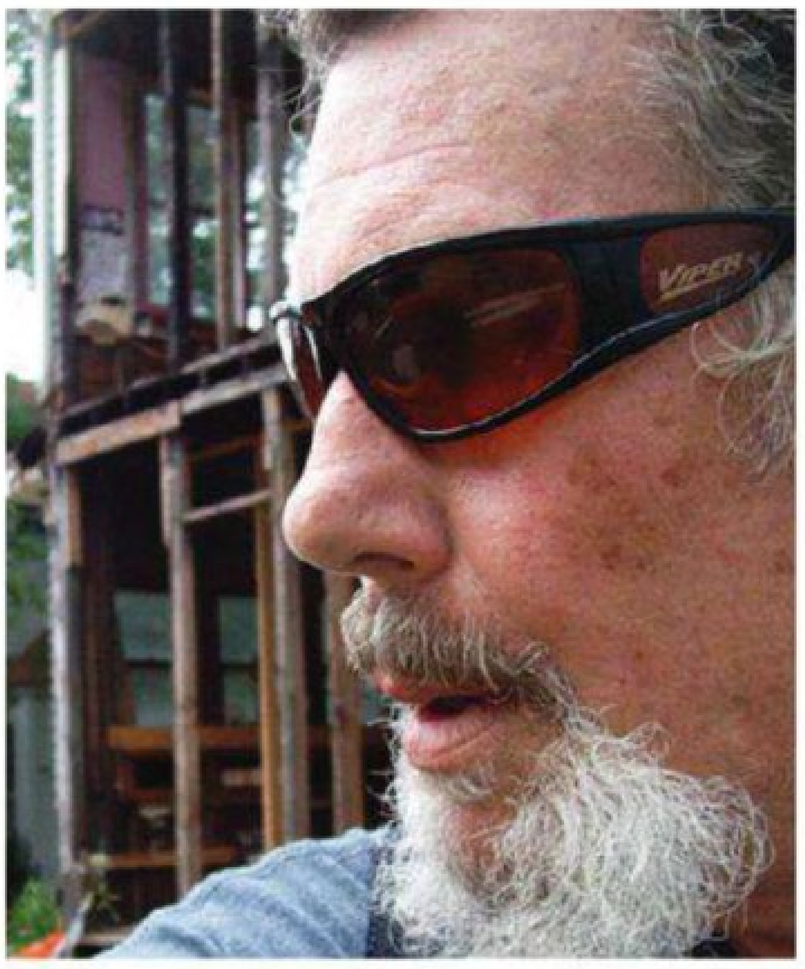
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editorial

GIVING SOMETHING BACK TO YOU, OUR READERS

We never have enough time here at ITA Castle—that's just a constant situation. There are never enough minutes in our hours, never enough hours in our days—and a definite shortage of days in our weeks and weeks in our months.

Everyone hits shortfalls in life, even when there's not a depression going on. I don't think anyone anywhere has enough money, us included. In the smaller sense, we often can't find a roll of tape or a pencil in our bare-naked supply closet. Office supplies are always vamoosed when we need them. When naptime comes around, we don't have enough couches, Barcaloungers, or cots for the whole staff to saw wood at the same time.



It just seems like we're always coming up short somewhere.

Except when it comes to submission photos. We always have beaucoup reader/artist photos on hand. This, of course, is due to you. No group of readers anywhere takes care of business like you do.

I've probably said it before but I'll say it again: a few years ago we had to discard or return about 70 percent of the photos we got in the mail. Only about 25 percent or 30 percent were worth keeping. Now that percentage has been flipped and then some—we keep at least 80 percent of what you send, and sometimes more. The quality is way up.

And the space we have to print your photos remains the same, year after year. It's bound to happen, under those conditions—more and better photos flooding in, space staying the same—that our files would get to bulging like a fat man's belly and finally would threaten to burst.

Ours are threatening to burst.

In view of that, we trimmed a couple things from this issue you hold in your hands and plunged heavy with your photos.

We know that giving you the recognition you deserve is an important part of our job here at International Tattoo Art. A cat from Belgium, I think it was, once told me that he got a job in a Brussels shop mainly because one of his tattoo photos had been published in ITA. He was a real good guy, I remember that, and the industry is going to be better because he's in it. When we can do something like that, even when it's not something we plan to do, it falls way over on the plus side.

We should do more of it.

Which is what we're doing here. Call it a Reader Appreciation Issue. Because we certainly do appreciate you.

And we don't want anything to get in the way of your mail reaching us.

Every month we get two or three e-mails asking how to send pictures or where to send them. That's way more than we need of those. We try to get instructions out there as clearly as possible in every issue, but if that's not enough, we'll go that extra mile and do what we have to do.

We really value your submissions and want to be sure that they get here safely, and if used, are credited correctly. Send photographs only—NO DISCS PLEASE—to:

International Tattoo Art
669 Montrose Ave.
South Plainfield, NJ
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Each photo has to have the name of the artist, the shop name, a phone number or some other contact information. It is not enough to just write your information once and toss it into the envelope. You wouldn't believe how often we end up with unidentified photos of magnificent tattoos that have to be tossed out because we have no idea who did the work.

One last thing—we really prefer that you send only standard drugstore sized prints, 4" x 6", and not bigger. You may think bigger is better, but in our case, bigger often means that the prints get folded around the edges. Plus they cost you more. Save your dough and make our lives easier at the same time.

So haul yourself down to a photo place and get some nice prints made, write on the backs, and send them to us. We'll appreciate it.

After all, we may only do a Reader Appreciation Issue once in a while, but on a daily basis, even if we don't say it, we appreciate you right down to your toes.

--Chris Pfouts

"Like any artist, I need reliable colors that go in with ease, no complications and stay vibrant and beautiful. That's what you get with Bloodline!" -Freddi Negrete, Shamrock Tattoo, West Hollywood

"I have had nothing but good outcomes on every tattoo. The ink is easy to put in the skin, doesn't make a mess and heals fast." -Oso, Tribal Ways Tattoo

"The quality of the ingredients and the attention to detail that goes into making these inks is surpassed by none. I will be tattooing with this product for the rest of my career." -George Edwin Totten, Golden Eagle Tattoo, Santa Barbara

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"For a 'dynamic array' of colors, your results will always be portfolio worthy." -Madison Tattoo Shop, North Hollywood

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letters to the editor

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ARTIST ON THE MOVE

I had an article in your July issue. I had submitted my information a few months ago and now work at a different studio. Is it possible to run a correction in the next issue if July has already gone to print? Or if it hasn't yet, just put a footnote on the article with the new website and e-mail? Here's the new info: Insight Studios 1062 N. Milwaukee Chicago, Ill. 60642, www.insightstudiosonline.com paetzoldjeff@yahoo.com (773) 342-4444.

—Jeff Paetzold
Insight Studios
Chicago

GRRRL POWER

This is a little off the wall, I guess, but I feel like saying it real loud so here goes. I was watching Ami James' new show, "NY Ink." The little tiny punk-rock girl tattooer, Megan, I think, was complaining about the hard parts of her life, and she blamed a lot of it on being female.

Well, I'm not a tattoo artist. I'm not five feet tall or whatever she is. But I AM A FEMALE IN A HEAVILY MALE PROFESSION—I'm a heavy equipment mechanic: road graders, crawlers, dozers, that kind of thing.

So in the tattoo world I'm an outsider, but when I heard that girl blaming some of her hard times on the simple fact of being female, I got kind of pissed off. Outsider I am; stupid I'm not. I've been to a lot of conventions and I'm heavily tattooed.

My observation is that tattooing is one of the most welcoming jobs for women out there—except for the old traditional ones like teaching and clerking. In fact, a lot of guys I know prefer to go to a female artist on the theory that a woman has a softer touch and won't hurt you as badly. Me, I have no illusions like that, but to each his or her own, I say.

Anyway, that aside, there have been two episodes of "NY Ink" so far and it looks like it's going to be a pretty good show.

—Angie Costas
Via e-mail

CLICK FOR NICK

In your May, 2011, issue you featured an artist named Nick Malasto. Killer work. Really killer. IT AMAZES ME THAT A GUY WHO HAS ALL THOSE DEMON FACES SWIMMING AROUND IN HIS HEAD ALSO HAS SWEET LITTLE BABY FACES ON BOARD.

I'm halfway kidding, ya know. All good artists seem to have a tremendous range of abilities. And no denying Malasto is a damn good artist. But it was a real boot in the plums to see those little baby faces at the end of his feature, after that big buffet of hell spawn.

—Mickey (Finn) Finestro
Via e-mail

DAYS ARE NUMBERED

I have a tattoo that might be totally unique—it's my lucky lotto numbers. I guess I shouldn't call them lucky so far, really. I've won a few bucks with them but not any real cash. But they feel lucky and I play them twice a week, 52 weeks a year.

See years ago I met a guy whose whole life was built around a numbers theory he had about the lotto, in fact all the state drawings. He had book after book filled with numbers stacked up and turned around. He'd say like, "See this 14. It's not really a 14. Well, it is, but in relation to the other numbers in the draw it is either a seven or a 21 in disguise." And then he'd try to show me how the hell that worked, which it didn't.

Anyway, I worked myself out a number based on his theories and I play it. I have great hopes for it. I GOT IT TATTOOED ON THE BACK OF MY LEFT HAND SO I CAN SEE IT CONVENIENTLY to fill out a lottery card. It's not likely I'm going to forget the numbers after all that work, but they're there anyway.

You ever heard of that before?

—Steve Pennebaker
Via e-mail

We've seen lots of lucky number tattoos but nothing quite so detailed or elaborate. Good luck with it, and don't forget to cut us in for a taste when you hit. Just enough to get our beaks wet.

THEY GOT THE GUNS, WE GOT THE NUMBERS

I'm not a tattoo artist, and as I have often read in ITA, tattooing does not need anyone else to stand up for it. But I'm going to lip off anyway. I GET SICK OF HEARING PEOPLE CALL A TATTOO MACHINE A GUN. As I read one guy saying once, I have my machines and I have my guns. I've made a lot more money with my machines.

Anyway, a guy that calls tattoo machines "guns" automatically drops about 50 notches in my estimation.

—Big Willy
Via e-mail

GETTING THAT INK

Hey how's it going? My name is

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Miguel Sulbaran. I currently tattoo in a professional studio called The Tattoo Spot, in Memphis Tenn. I WAS JUST CURIOUS ON THE PROCESS OF BEING SELECTED FOR A POSSIBLE FEATURE IN YOUR GREAT PUBLICATION, and what steps if any I could take to somehow submit my bio and portfolio for possible selection. Thanks guys and keep up the great work.

—Miguel Sulbaran
The Tattoo Spot
Memphis, TN
Via e-mail

Hello my name is Clint. I've been a long-time fan of your magazine. I AM CURRENTLY GETTING MY TORSO WORKED ON AND WAS CURIOUS ABOUT HOW YOU GUYS CHOOSE WHO TO COVER IN YOUR MAGAZINE. I know a very good artist in Texas that I think would be good for an article. I was just hoping to touch bases and see what you guys are looking for. I hope to hear from you.

—Clint Wilhoit
Via e-mail

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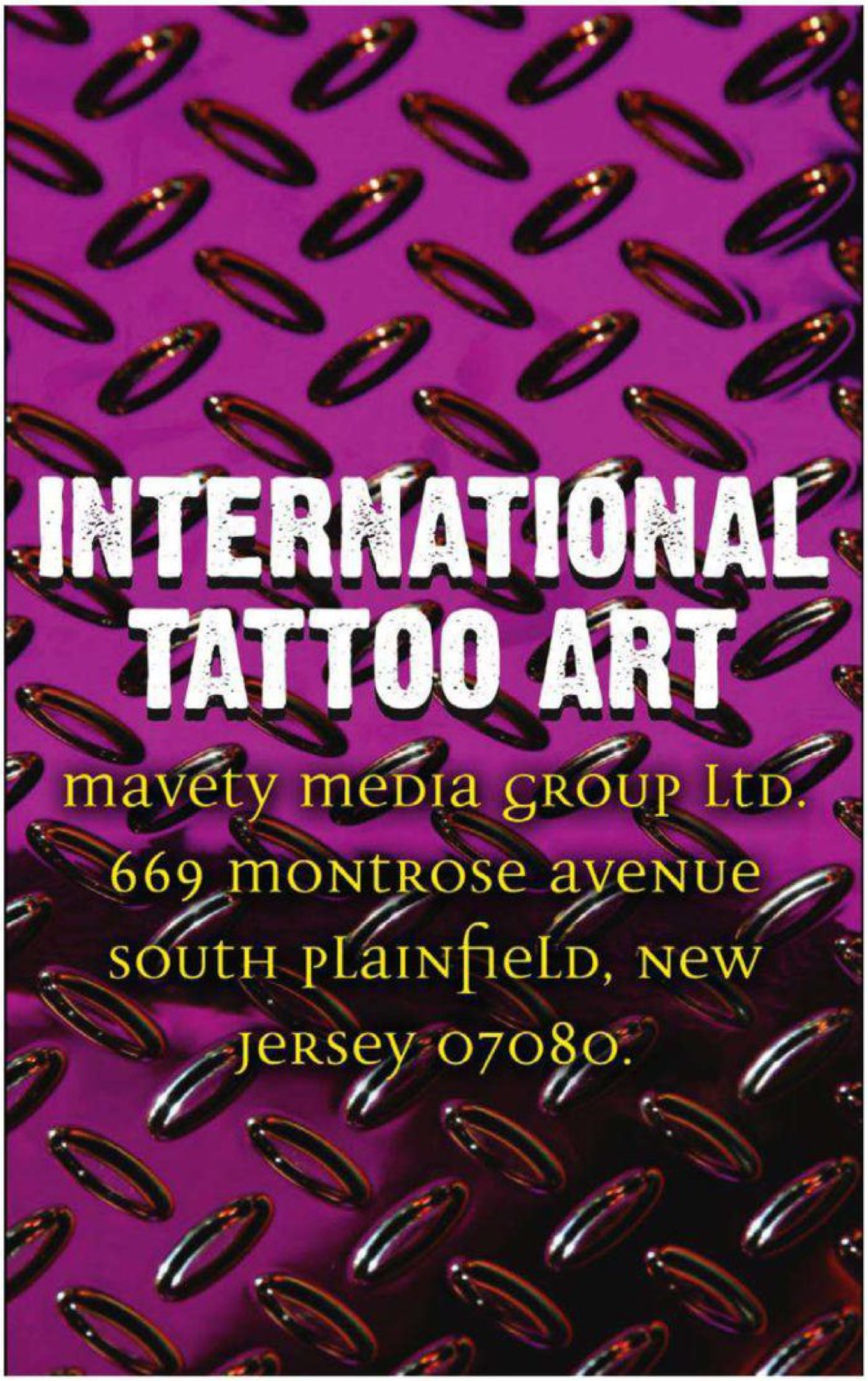
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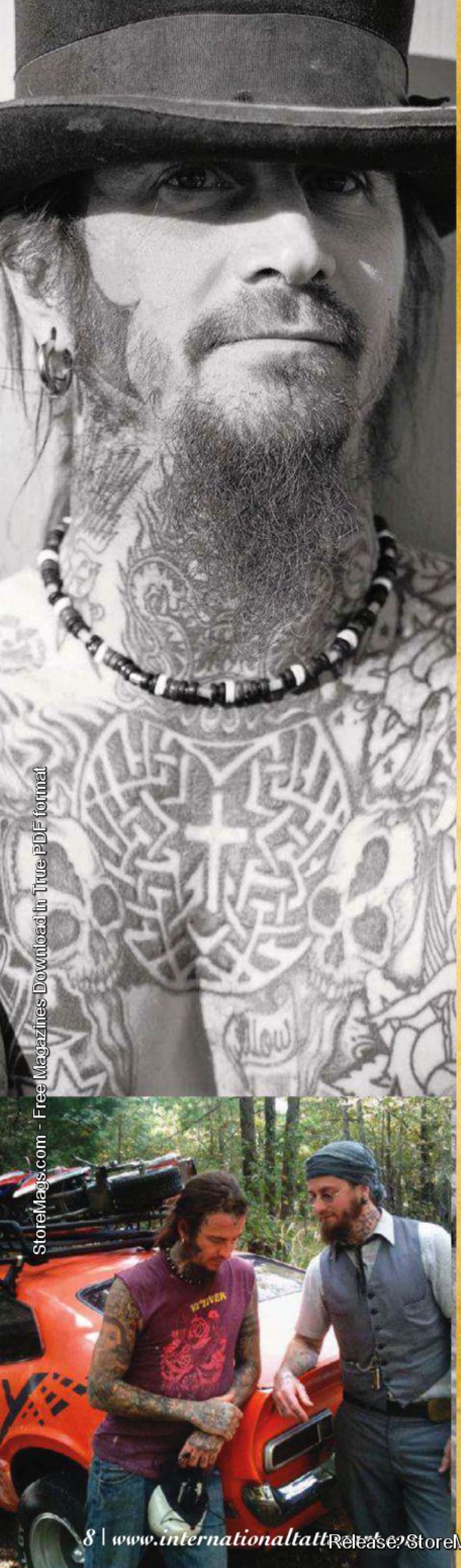
There is no specific person to direct them to—it all goes to the same place, which is the right place. Be sure that your name, shop name, and address are on the back of EACH PHOTO. A phone number is also helpful. Just throwing a piece of paper with the name on it into the envelope is not sufficient. If you need to be certain that the package arrived, use the U.S. Post Office's Delivery Confirmation system. They attach a green sticker to the item and you can check its status online. Or ship FedEx or UPS. Because of the volume of mail we receive we cannot answer questions about an individual package either by phone or online.

Finally—we ask that you send us exclusive photographs. If you're sending the work to other places at the same time, we'd rather not get it. Our lead time is long—we work as much as five months ahead of the cover date, so be patient.

RIP RANDY SAVAGE

We're not huge wrestling fans here at ITA, but we have at least a passing interest. Among other things, the wrestling community is hugely into tattooing, which makes us pay attention. Macho Man Randy Savage was around for quite a while, a real pillar of the grappling community. Snap into a Slim Jim in his memory. Ohhhh yeah.





SO LONG O

Long before I became an assistant editor for International Tattoo Art, I was Mitchell Atkinson's friend. I met Mitch and his twin brother, Watson, who we all knew as Mike, back when we were teenagers, some 20-plus years ago. Watson and I dated for half a second, but Mitchell and I became close in a different way. He was my pal. Over the years, Mitch and I have remained friends, occasional roommates and confidants. When I went through rough times and needed comfort, he took me in as a roommate and held me close to him as a friend. When he needed something from me, I—I hope—was there to do the same for him.

Both of the twins were living with me in a tiny one-bedroom apartment in Bloomington, Indiana, when I started reading tattoo magazines and developed my little obsession with tattoos. I came up with this crazy idea that the twins should start tattooing. I mentioned it to Mitch. He considered the idea and ran with it. Before long, it seemed all of our friends were in on the plan. Everyone but Watson, that is. Watson had other ideas about what he wanted to do with his art. After much persuasion, Watson relented and the twins took the tattoo scheme and ran with it—quite literally—to Athens, Georgia, where they both built successful careers under the moniker "The Twins of Pain."

I have always known Mitch to take crazy ideas and run with them. I've seen him through times of great health. I've also seen him during times of great struggle. Overall, he was a successful tattoo artist, a man of many ideas, a father, and a husband to two beautiful women. While his marriages didn't last, his relationships with the women he took to be his wives lingered. Regularly, he was seen walking around Georgia with "Ex-Wife #1" and "Ex-Wife #2" at his side. Mitchell was known for his sweetness. He was fallible, yes, but he loved and accepted everyone, immediately.

On April 8, 2011, Mitchell Atkinson's name showed up on my cell phone. He was back in his hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana, where I'd met him a couple of decades prior, and he wanted to pay me a visit. In fact, he had staying a while in mind. "You know I've got this thing for whiskey," he told me. "I drink too much of it, and I'm back home and wondering: Can you look up someone for me to talk to? I feel like I need spiritual guidance."

Mitchell wanted to clean himself up a little. He thought staying for a time in Indiana, remaining sober, and visiting with old friends might do the trick. He arrived at my house and set up camp. I regularly work out at LA Fitness and Mitchell went with me for a little exercise. He even paid up front for two months' worth of a membership of his own.

Mitchell wound up only staying a few days. Over the weekend, we worked out at the gym, we drove around, we visited old friends, we talked about life, about love, and about God. As he drove, I scolded him about not wearing his seatbelt. He assured me he had never wrecked his car. We also talked about death. He told me he never said goodbye to people when he parted ways with them; instead he said:

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LD FRIEND

"See ya on the flipside." That way, if he never saw them again alive, he felt he would see them on the other side.

My friend talked a lot about his past marriages and about his children. He told me how much they meant to him and he lamented how much of their lives he was missing because of his lifestyle. He wanted to be a good role model for his kids. He wanted this, but I'm not sure he knew quite how to do it. I saw grief on his face as he spoke.

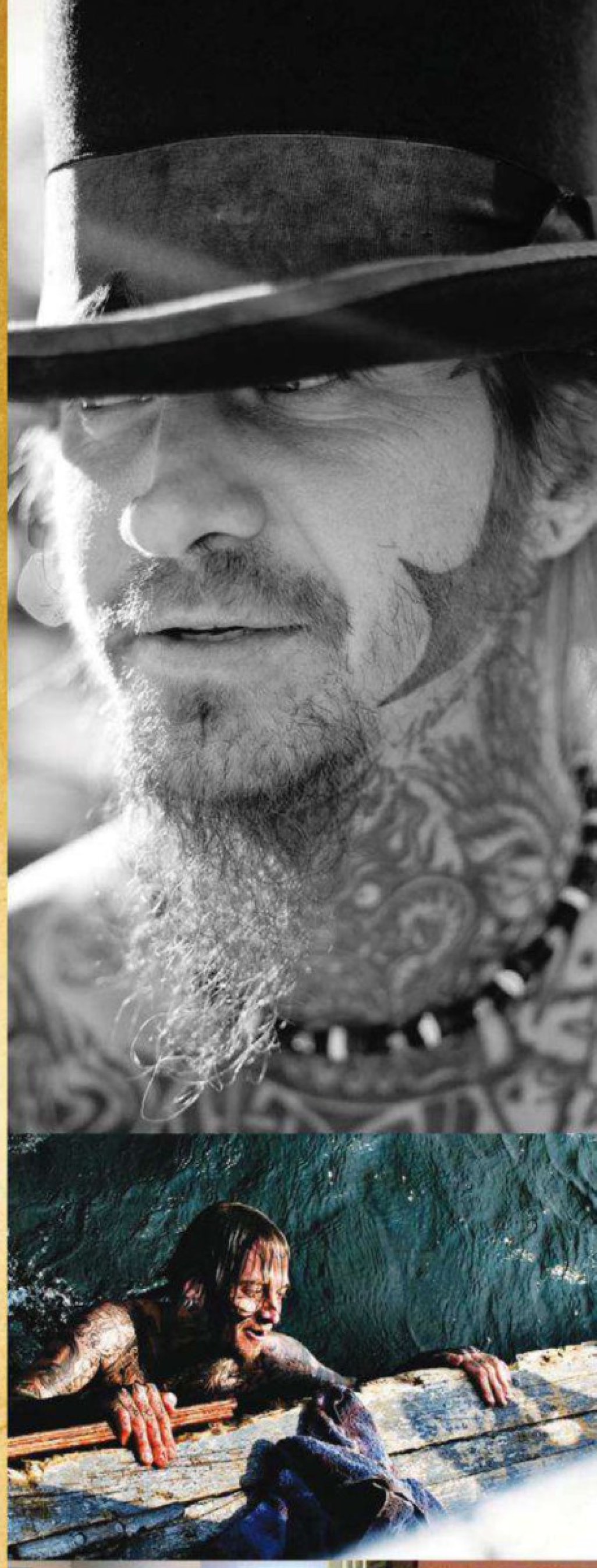
At one point, he explained how he saw every chance meeting with people as an opportunity for a short relationship, and he'd hoped to make people feel good in those relationships, regardless of how long they were. I saw this in effect; we went in to grab breakfast one morning, and he chatted with the counter staff. He'd smile, answer questions about his tattoos, ask them about their days, their jobs, their lives, and, in his own small way, show them that he cared about what they had to say. That was Mitchell's essence. He was everybody's friend.

On the Sunday after his arrival, Mitchell traveled to the northside of Indianapolis and visited his childhood home. As luck had it, the same neighbor who lived in the area as a youngster still lived in the house next door and was able to get Mitch into his old house. Late that night, he showed up at my door. Mitchell explained how emotional his day had been and how his visit to his home had given him some much-needed closure. He told me he was ready to leave. The open road, he said, was his one love. And he felt most at peace when he was behind the wheel of his car. With that, he grabbed his things, hugged me, told me he loved me, and said: "See ya on the flipside."

Mitchell died around 3 a.m. on May 3, 2011, one day shy of his 40th birthday and approximately three weeks after he left my home. He had been driving his car, speeding after a night out at the bar, and he crashed into an apartment building across the street from his tattoo shop in Athens, Georgia. Just a few weeks prior, Mitchell had come back to his home in search of spiritual guidance. I believe wherever my old friend is today, he has it.

—Sherri Cullison

Mitchell James Atkinson, of Athens, Georgia, formerly of Helen, Georgia, age 39, died on May 3rd, 2011. Mitchell was born on May 4, 1971, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the son of Janet Catherine Atkinson and William Paul Atkinson. His lust for life included the love of cars, motorcycles, and his many artistic endeavors. To know Mitchell was to know his wild side and his sweet side. He made an instant impression: tall, handsome, heavily ornamented, bright-eyed, quick with a smile and laugh. Mitchell is survived by his twin brother Watson Atkinson, his sister Monique Janet Hudson, and his brother Martin William Atkinson. Mitchell is also survived by his stepmother Linda Atkinson Wells. Mitchell has left behind two beautiful children: daughter Milla Eson Idaya Atkinson and son Gavin Elias Atkinson.







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FACE FIRST

Pennsylvania's John Pohl

By Amanda Stephan

The typical 4-year-old isn't likely to spend a great deal of time pondering his future. If a child is considering what to be when he grows up, it's safe to assume that the jobs coming to mind involve saving the world from evildoers or ruling an expansive kingdom. However, when John Pohl was four, he had already decided what his future would hold. His future was destined to include getting tattooed and giving tattoos for a living.

The world can thank John's Uncle Al for his youthful tattoo ambition. Uncle Al had a battleship chest piece from World War II and when Pohl grasped what it was and how it got there, he couldn't wait to have a tattoo of his own. In between the desire and the reality, Pohl spent the time skateboarding and occasionally sketching out the ideas floating around in his mind. At 15, Pohl finally found a way to get tattooed and that experience solidified his childhood ambition.

Pohl began tattooing immediately after he graduated from high school. "I didn't really have an apprenticeship," he said. "I was hired at a street shop in a crappy part of Philly and got thrown right in the mix tattooing names and flash. It wasn't until about a year after I started working there, when I went and got tattooed by Timothy Hoyer, that I saw how much I was doing wrong. I learned more in those few hours than I would've ever learned on my own." Although his early tattoo career was built on an unsteady foundation, Pohl was able to persevere and he continued to be consumed by tattooing.

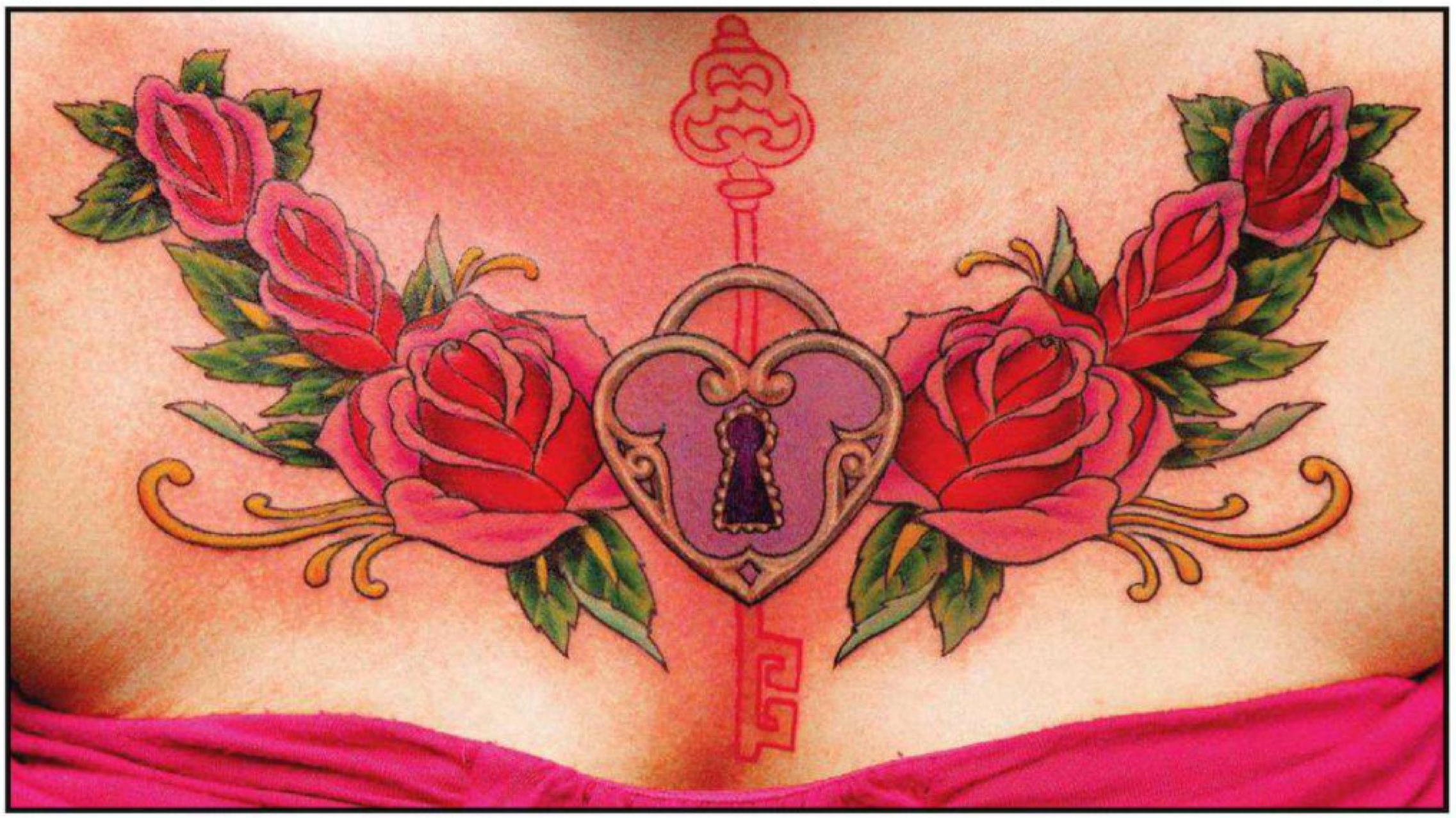
Approaching the end of his second decade as a tattooist, John currently creates his tattoos at Bonedaddy's Tattoo in Aston, Pennsylvania. The studio has been open since 2005 and is also home to artists Nate Cook and Jay Cunliffe. At Bonedaddy's, Pohl's tattooing attracts customers who want realistic or Japanese-style artwork. "With Japanese tattoos, when they're done correctly, they're just timeless," Pohl said. "They are bold and soft at the same time and will never go out of style."





"With realistic style," he continued, "I just like the challenge of it. It amazes me how far the boundaries of tattooing are being pushed. When I first started, I couldn't have imagined being able to do the kind of tattoos I'm doing today. And seeing the kind of art tattooers are putting out just makes me want to keep getting better." He enjoys depicting famous figures in film history, as well as the scene-stealing characters of more obscure films. In an effort to add tattoos of his favorite characters and realistic images to his portfolio, Pohl even advertises these images and screen shots online as tattoos that he wants to do. This method has helped him to link up with like-minded customers.

Pohl's interests have helped him connect with other like-minded artists as well. He does frequent guest spots at 570 Tattooing Co. in Pennsylvania, owned by another artist talented in realistic tattoos, Ron Russo. Pohl would love the opportunity to expand his artistic contacts and secure some guest spots out West, he says. Conventions are also a part of



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Pohl's art regimen. He tries to attend as many shows as he can, whatever travel he can fit into his budget. This year he plans on attending the Spooky Empire Show in Orlando, as well as the Philadelphia and Atlantic City shows.

When he's not traveling or tattooing, Pohl enjoys spending time with his wife, Katie. Convincing Katie to accept his marriage proposal is one of John's happiest achievements. "I've been married a little over a year now," he said, "but we've been together for 10 years. She's awesome. She really keeps me grounded and out of trouble. She keeps me motivated for the future." Pohl's wife and friends are incredibly supportive of his career and even travel with him to shows whenever possible.

Working on cars is another interest that John likes to explore when he's not tattooing. He's been a car enthusiast since he was a teenager, and he is currently restoring a 1970 Ford Mustang, which currently consumes most of his free time and money. "I've always loved old muscle cars," he said. "I had a few when I was younger, but didn't have money to fix them up or keep them running. But now since I have a house and I'm more stable in life, it's time to build my dream car. I still have about a year of work on it depending on money. It gets expensive!"

To be a part of John Pohl's future (and help support his Mustang habit), look for him on the Web at www.facebook.com/johnpohltattoos or at www.bonedaddytattoo.com.



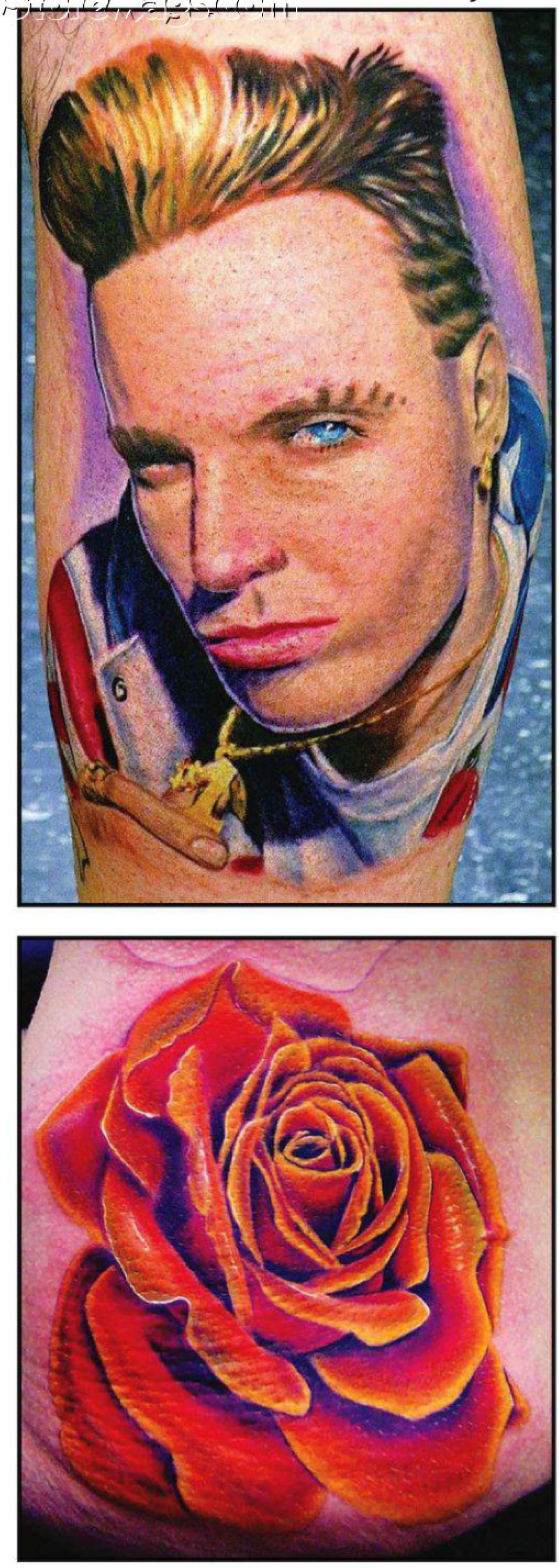




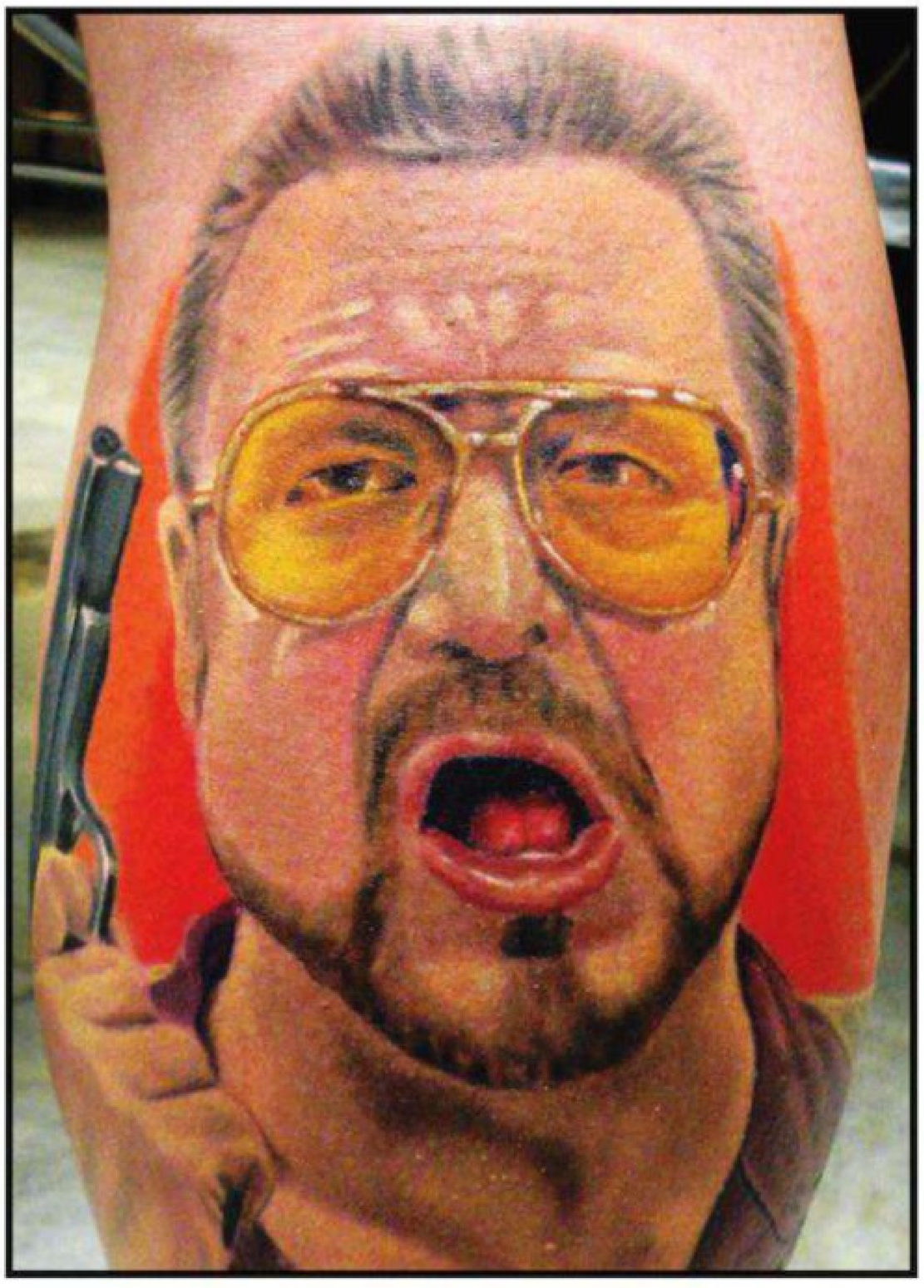
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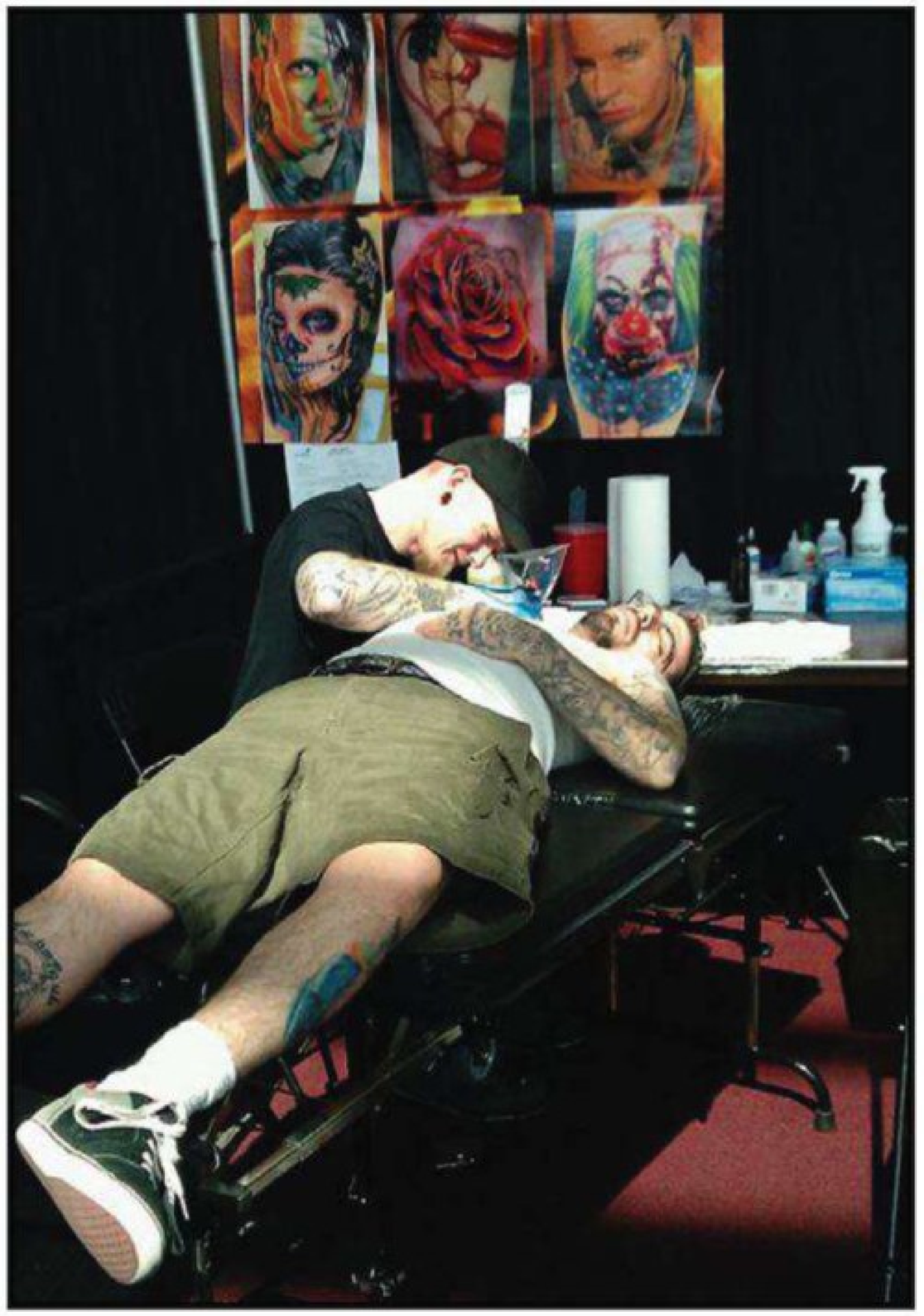


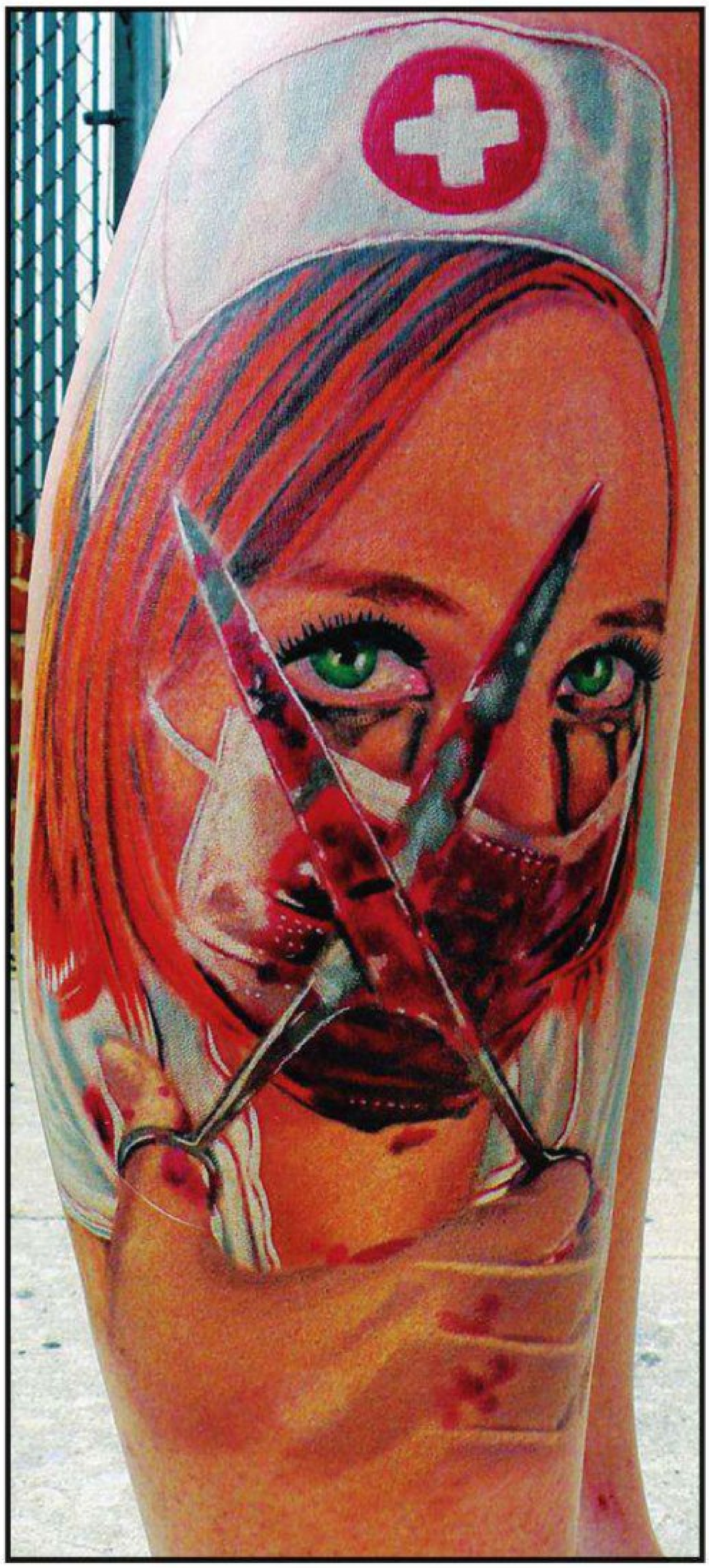




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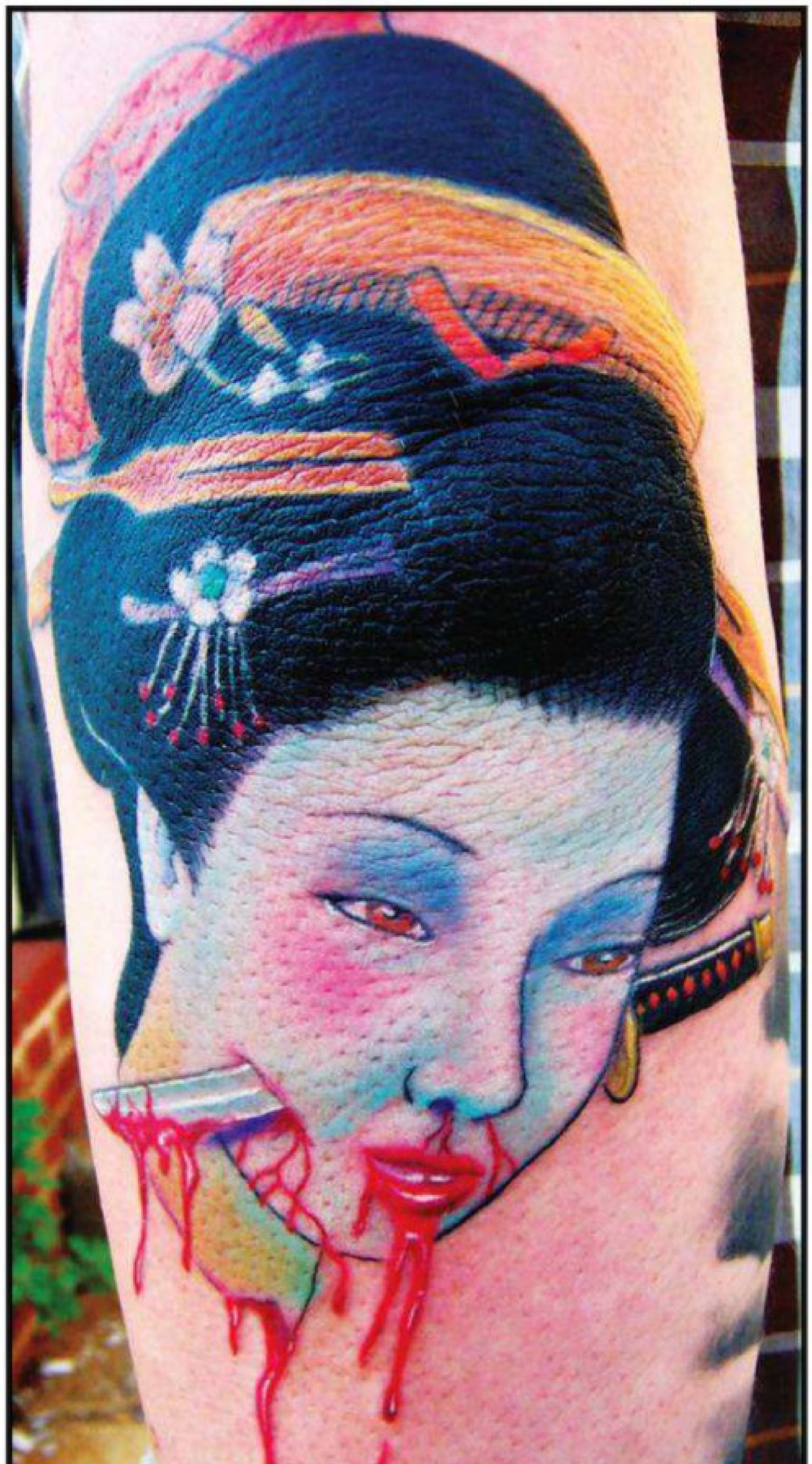






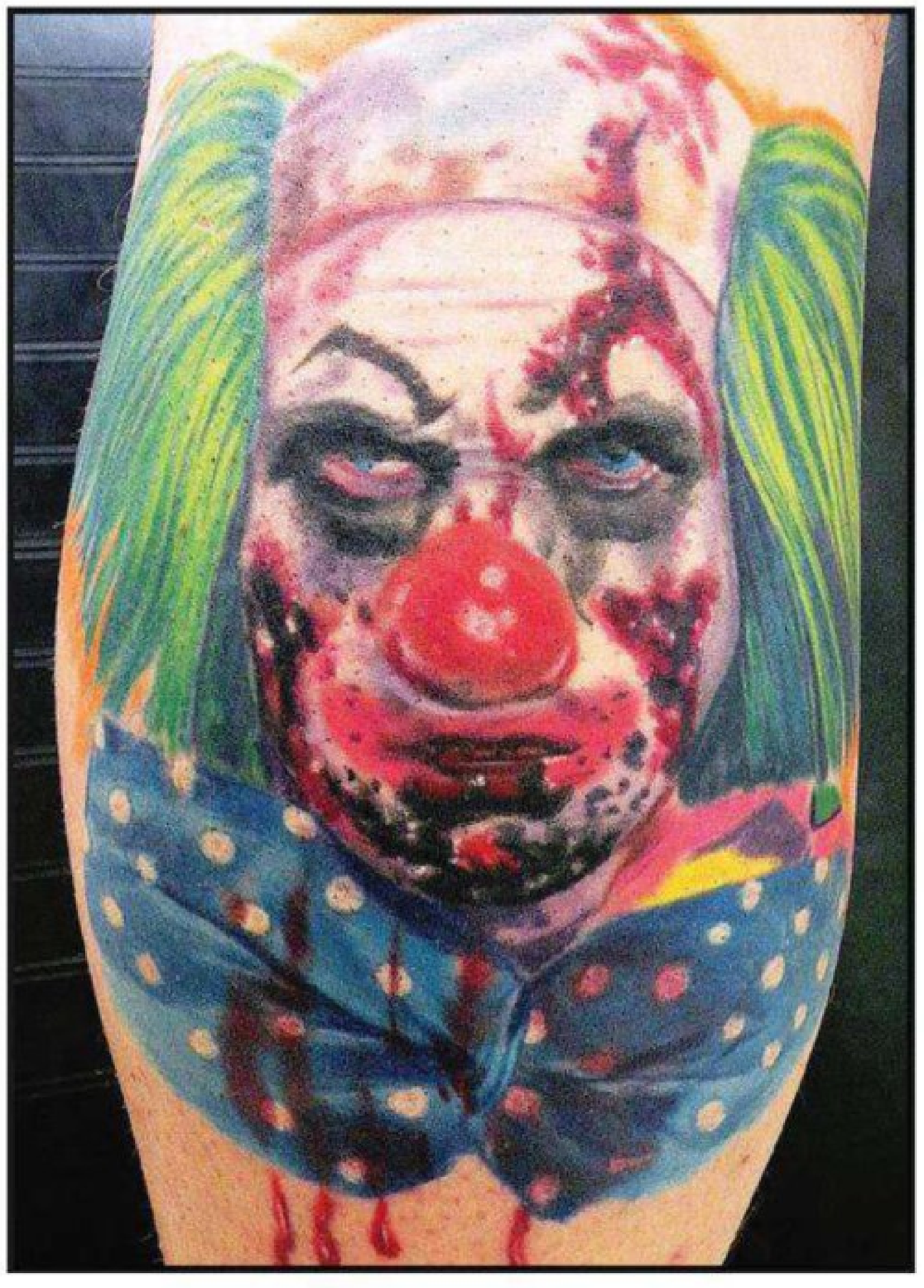
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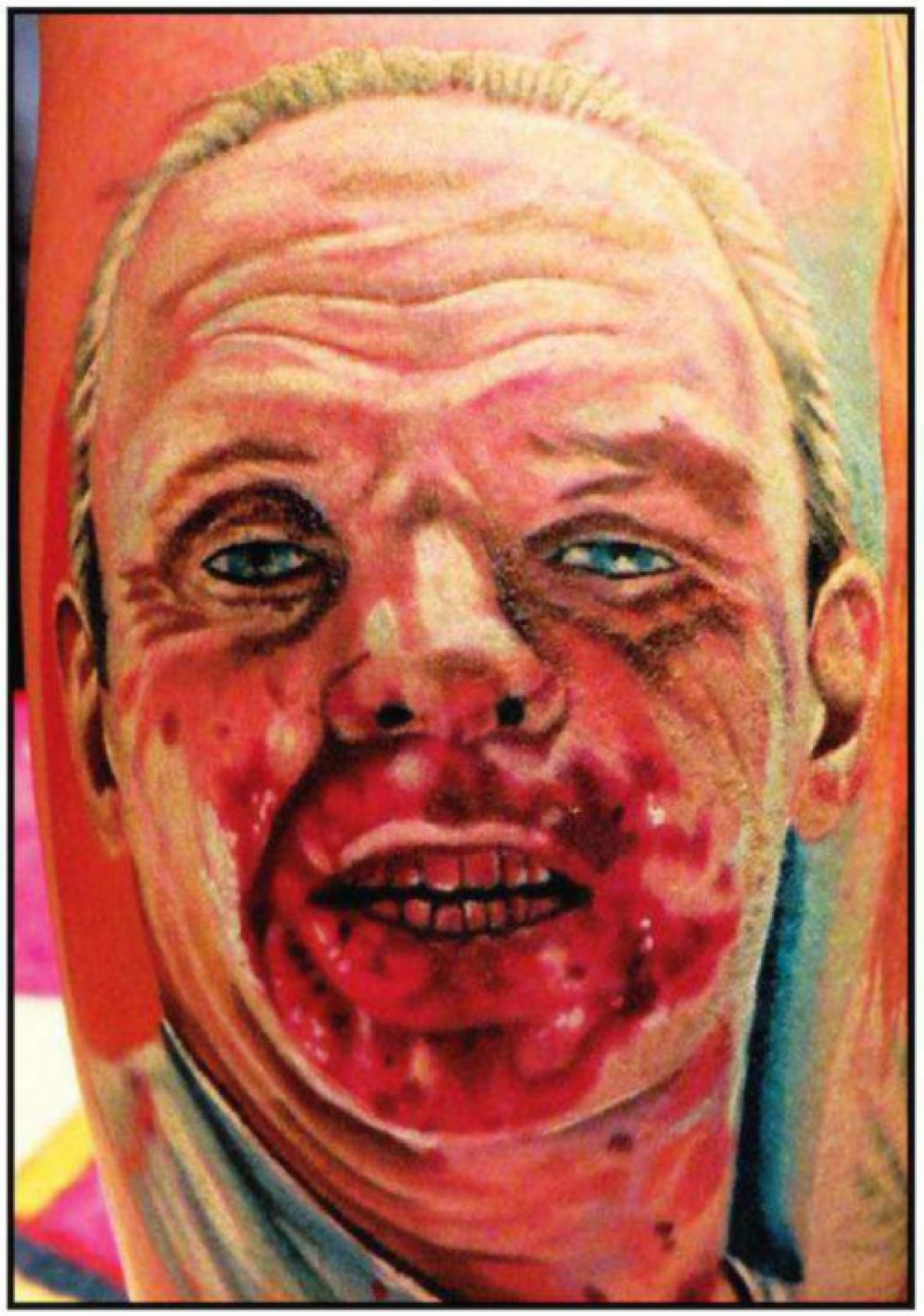




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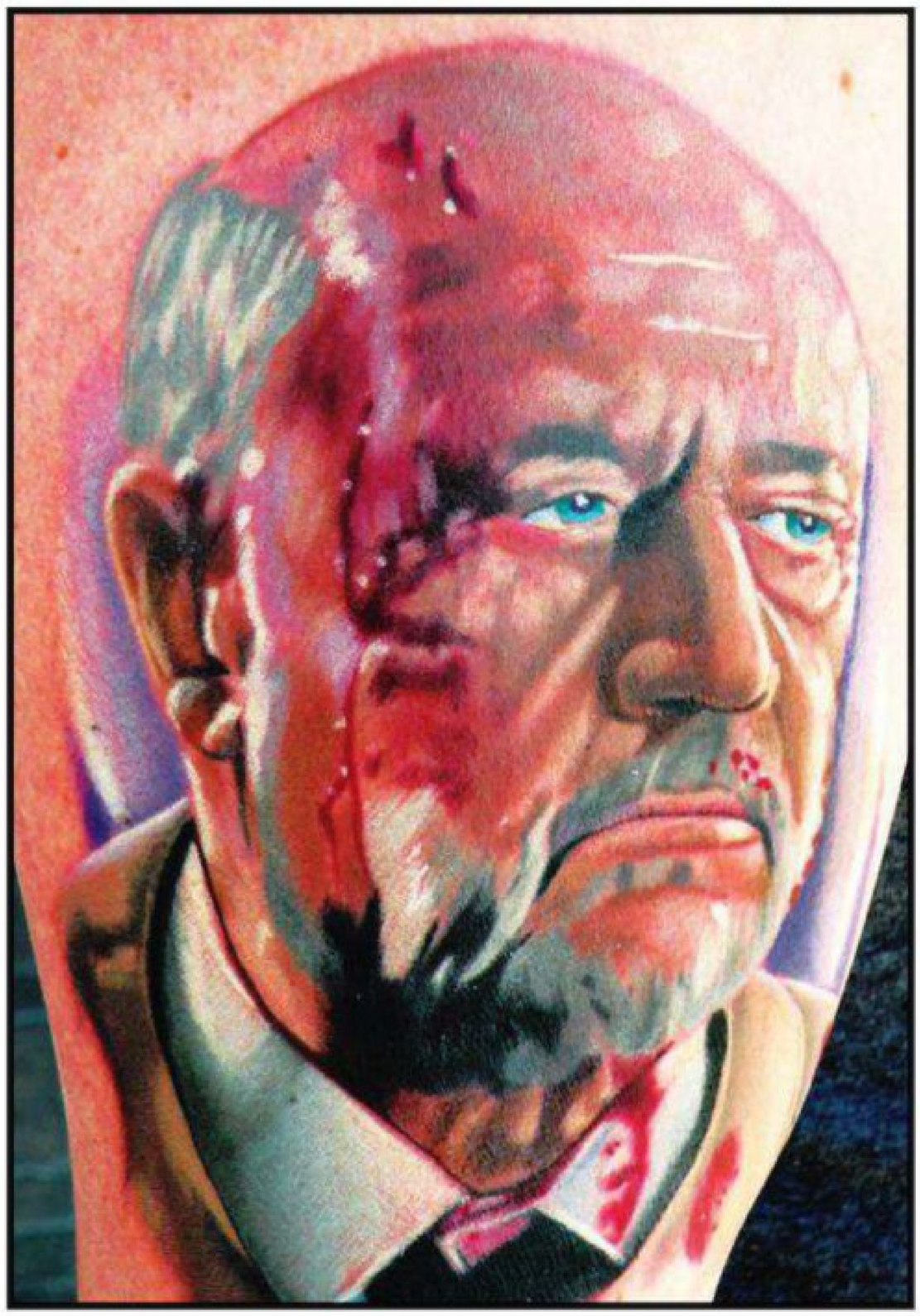
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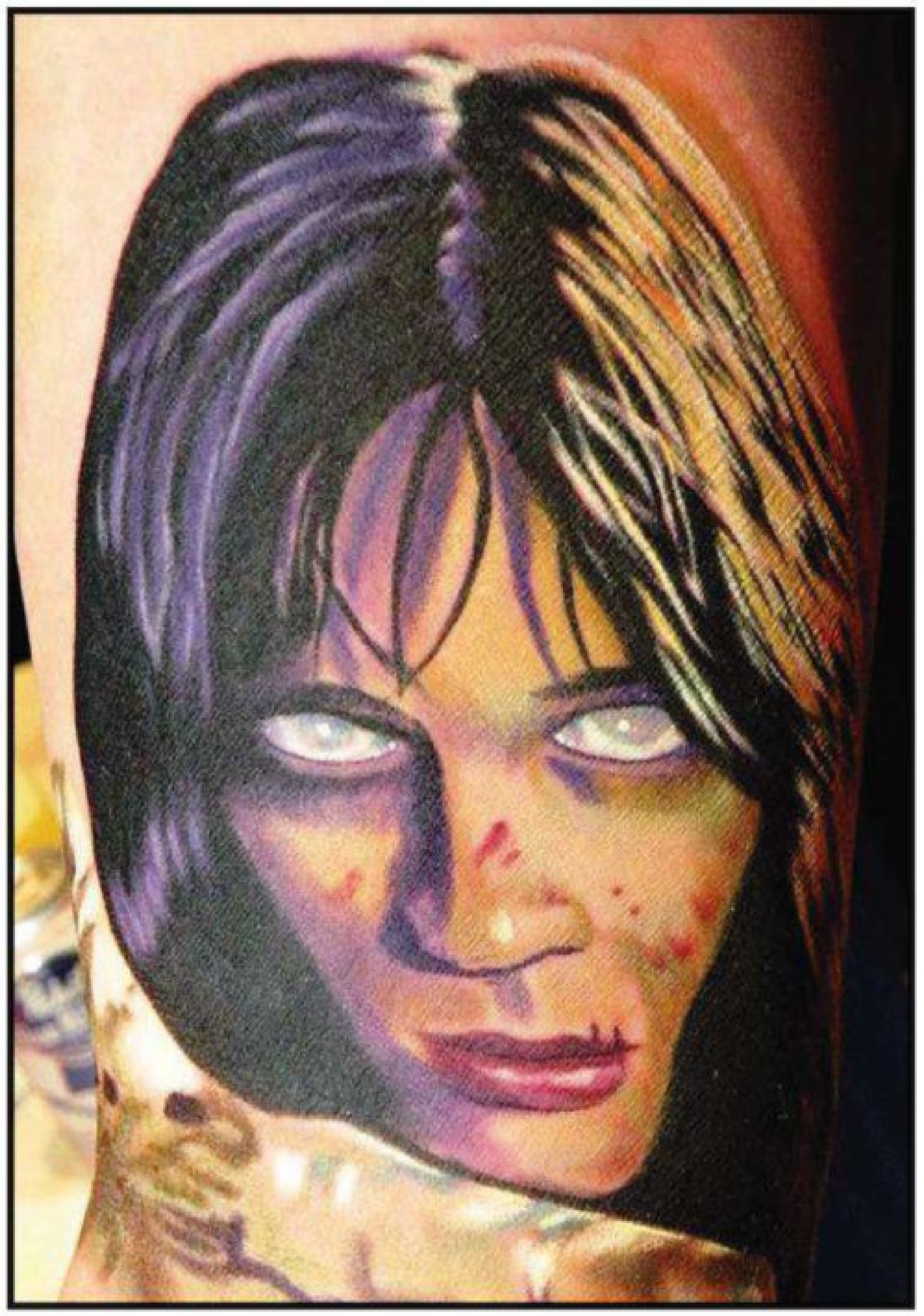


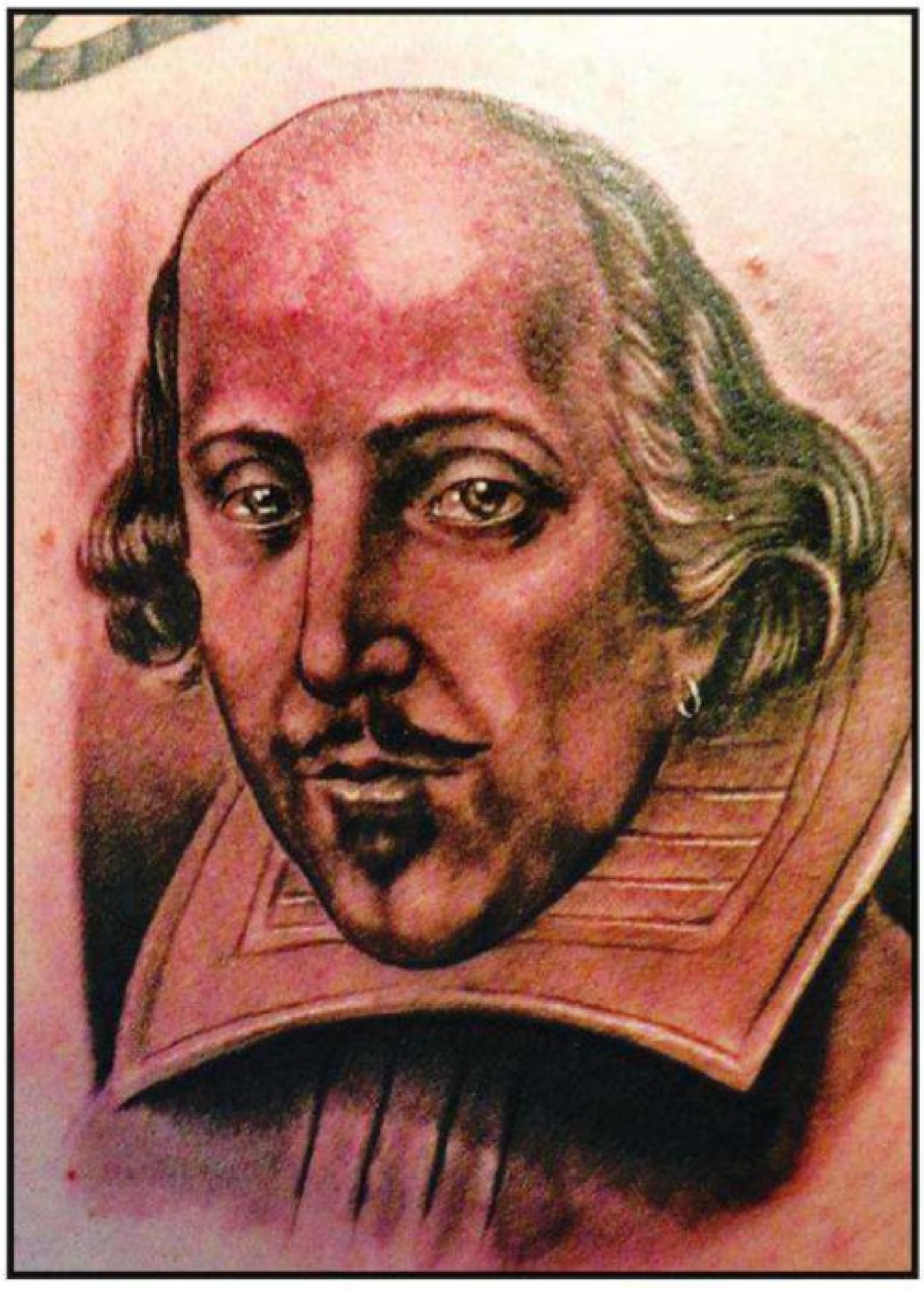


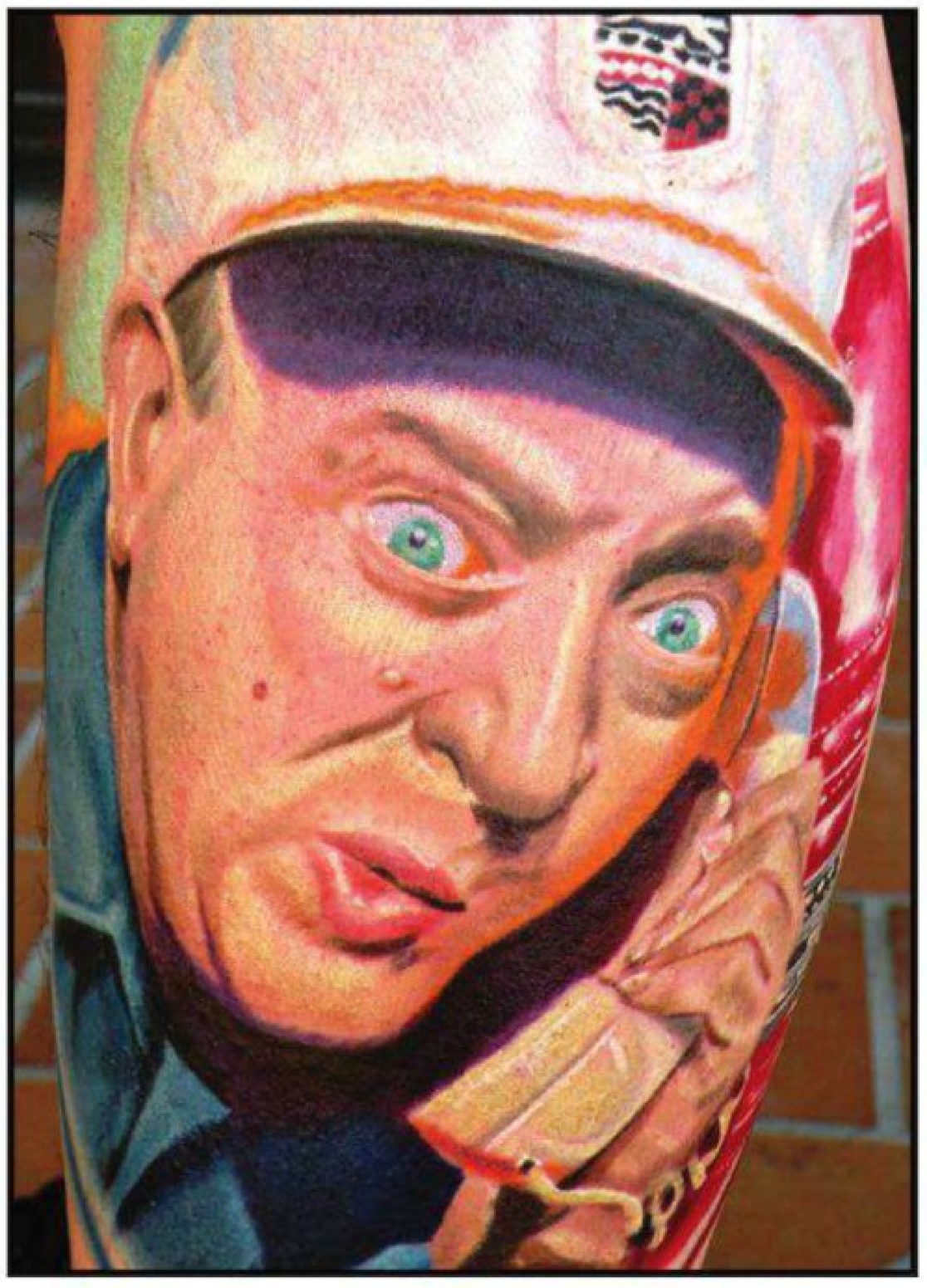






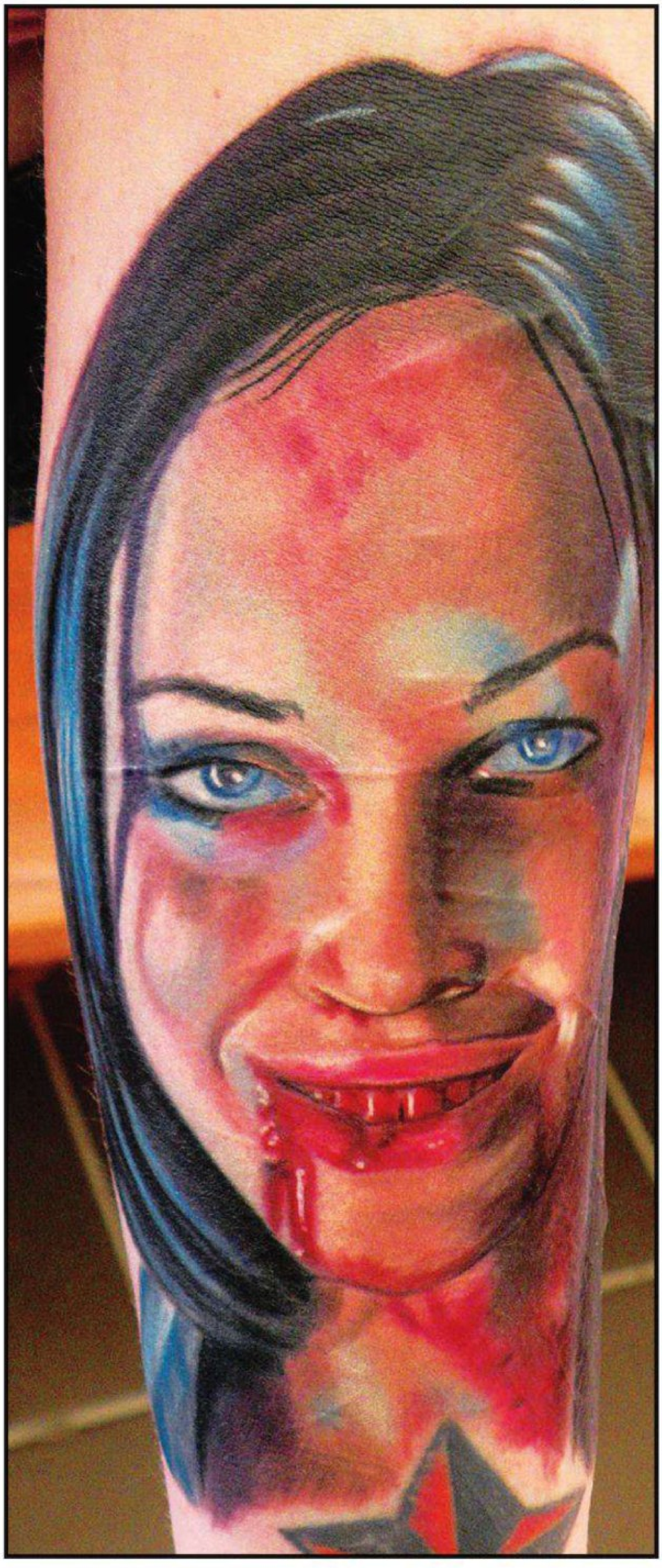




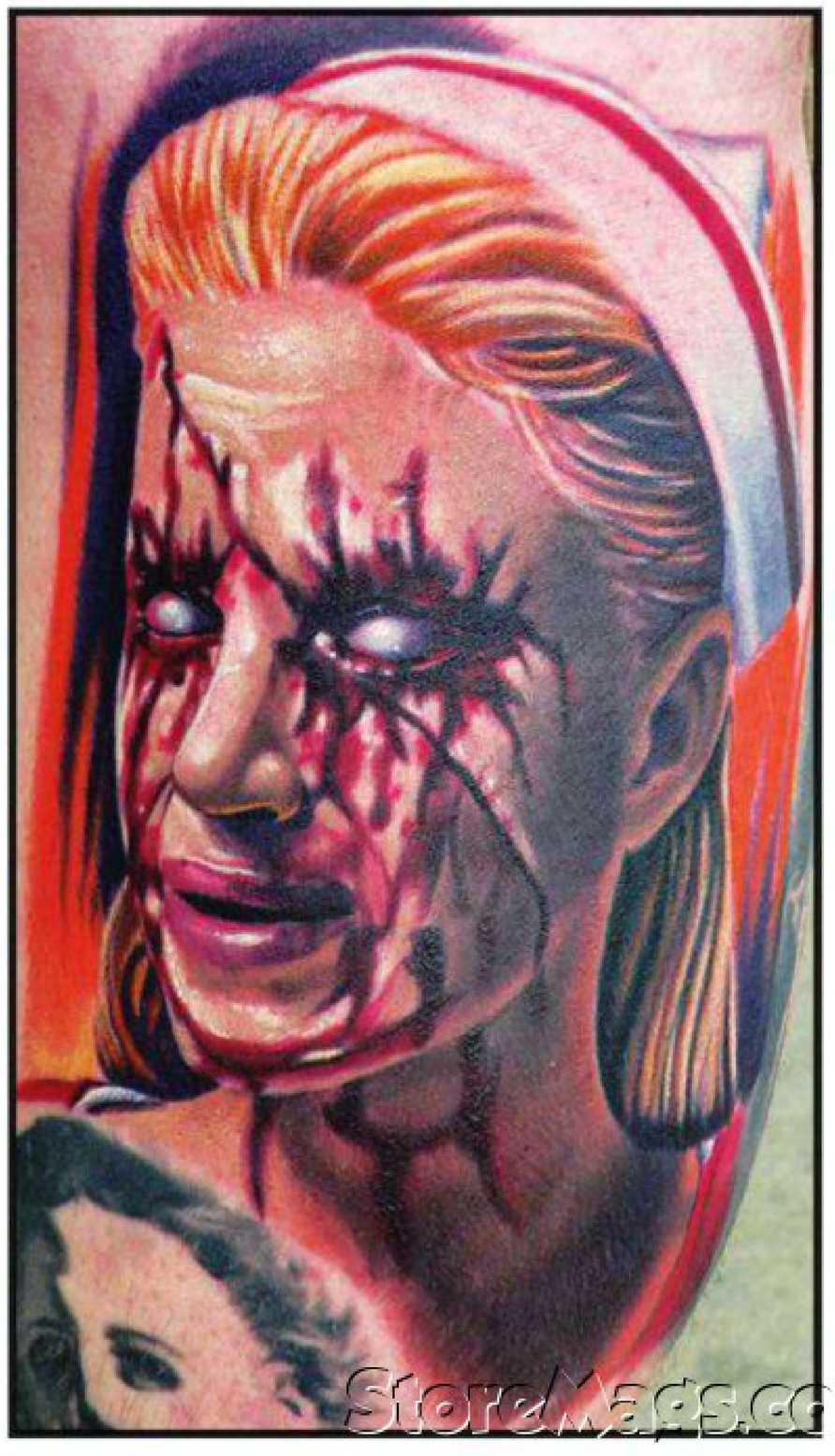


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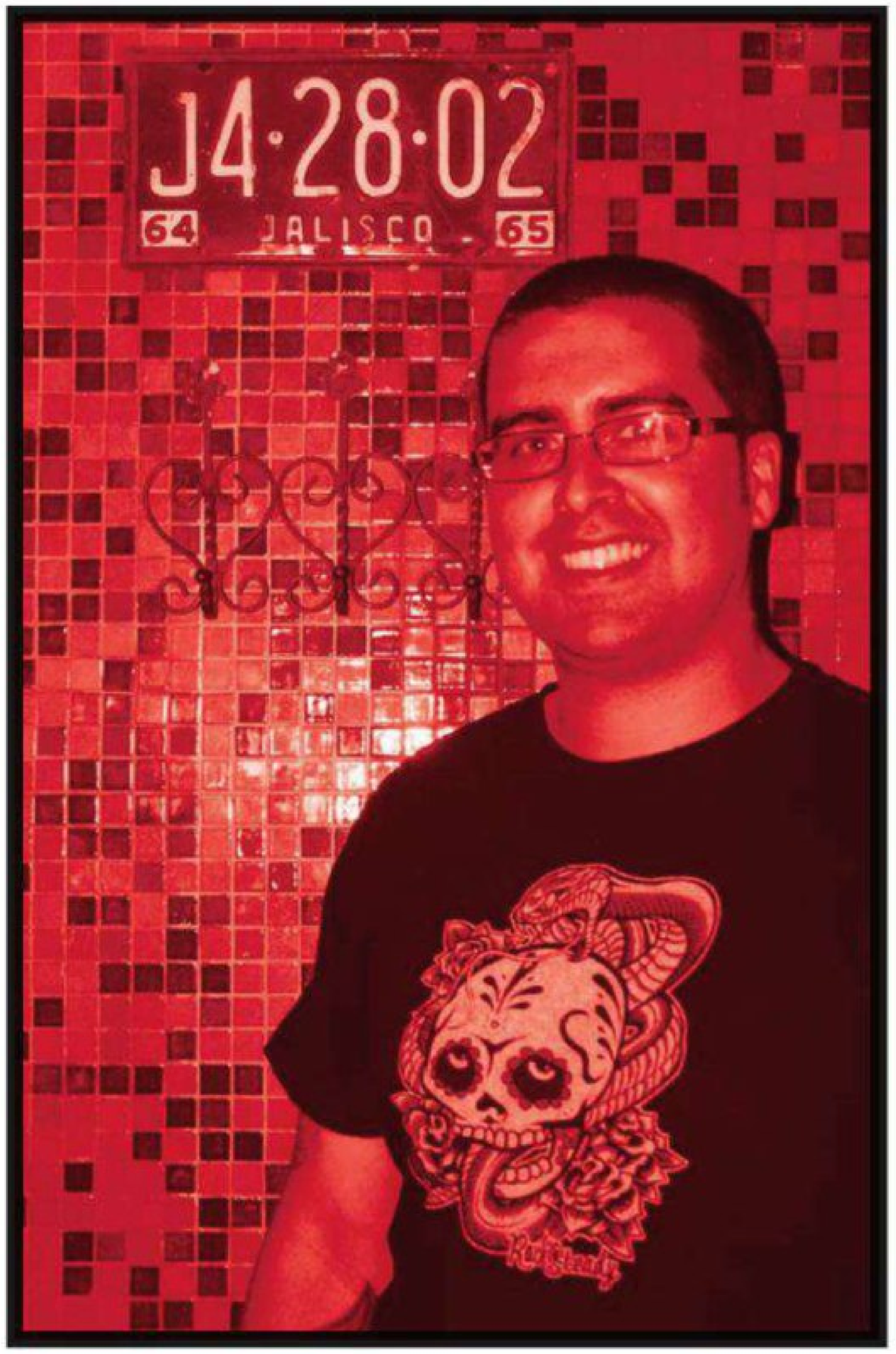
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RED ALERT

CHILE'S LEO ROJAS



By Amanda Stephan

COASTAL SOUTH AMERICA BETWEEN THE ANDES MOUNTAINS AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN. Chile has the world's driest desert, but also a Mediterranean climate in its central region, as well as a more temperate rainy climate to the south. This multifaceted environment presents Chile's populous with all that nature has to offer. In recent years, Chile has developed into a prosperous country at the forefront of Latin American art and music.

It's in this rich cultural stew that Leonardo Andres Rojas Valenzuela flourishes as an artist. Valenzuela, who usually goes by Leo Rojas, was born in Santiago, Chile, and he still lives there today. Santiago has been the setting for all of Leo's life experiences, the exceptional and the less than inspiring. It is there that he has discovered personal and professional inspiration.

Rojas grew up with a passion for art, and now he enjoys the privilege creating art eighty percent of his day. The bulk of his work takes place at Rojas' tattoo studio, Tatudemia, in Santiago. Establishing the studio is a huge personal achievement. "I am very proud of what I achieved artistically as a tattoo artist," he said, "and how the people value my work. But if I had to mention something special, it would be my tattoo studio."

Rojas' success is the result of years of hard work. He has devoted himself to tattooing for the last 12 years, 10 of which he has worked as a professional artist. Before that, he toiled at a number of other jobs, but always dreamed of working as an artist. "I worked in many things," he said, "but mainly I was a master welder. That's what I studied before I worked as an artist. In every moment of my life I only thought of tattooing."

Where others may have the luxury of formal training to assist in their mastery of tattooing, Rojas had none. "The majority of my knowledge was self taught," he said, "but I attended a pair of courses in drawing and painting in the School of Arts in the University of Chile." Rojas has studied the art of others in an effort to broaden his frame of reference. Surrealist painters like Salvador Dali and Baroque artists like Caravaggio played a large role in Rojas' artistic development. When he paints, he prefers to incorporate techniques and styles evident in both styles of art.

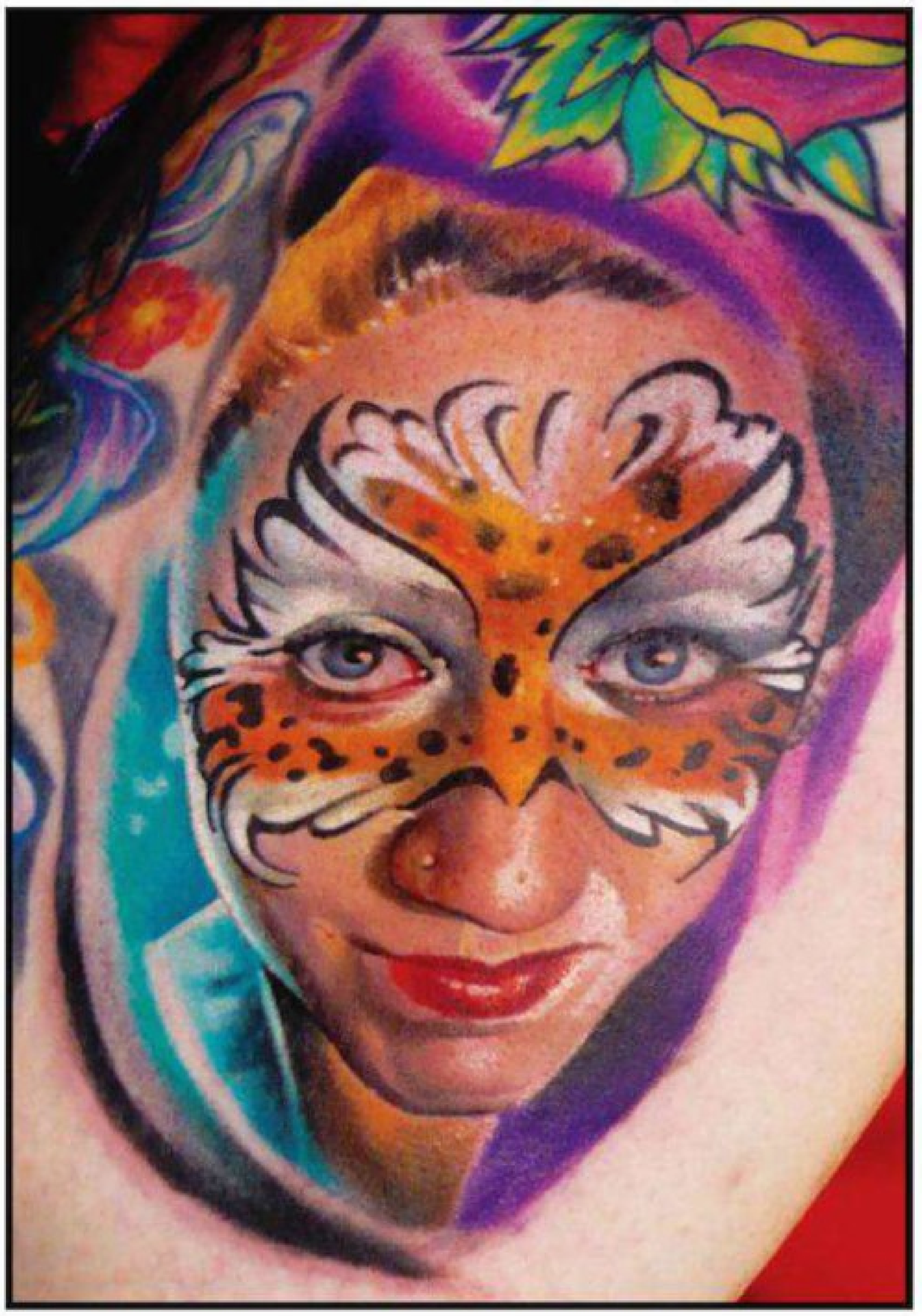
Numerous tattoo artists have impacted Rojas' development. Realistic tattooists like Robert Hernandez, Nikko Hurtado, Alex de Passe and Jeff Gogue are major players in the tattoo world and in the niche that Rojas has carved

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Leo Rojas







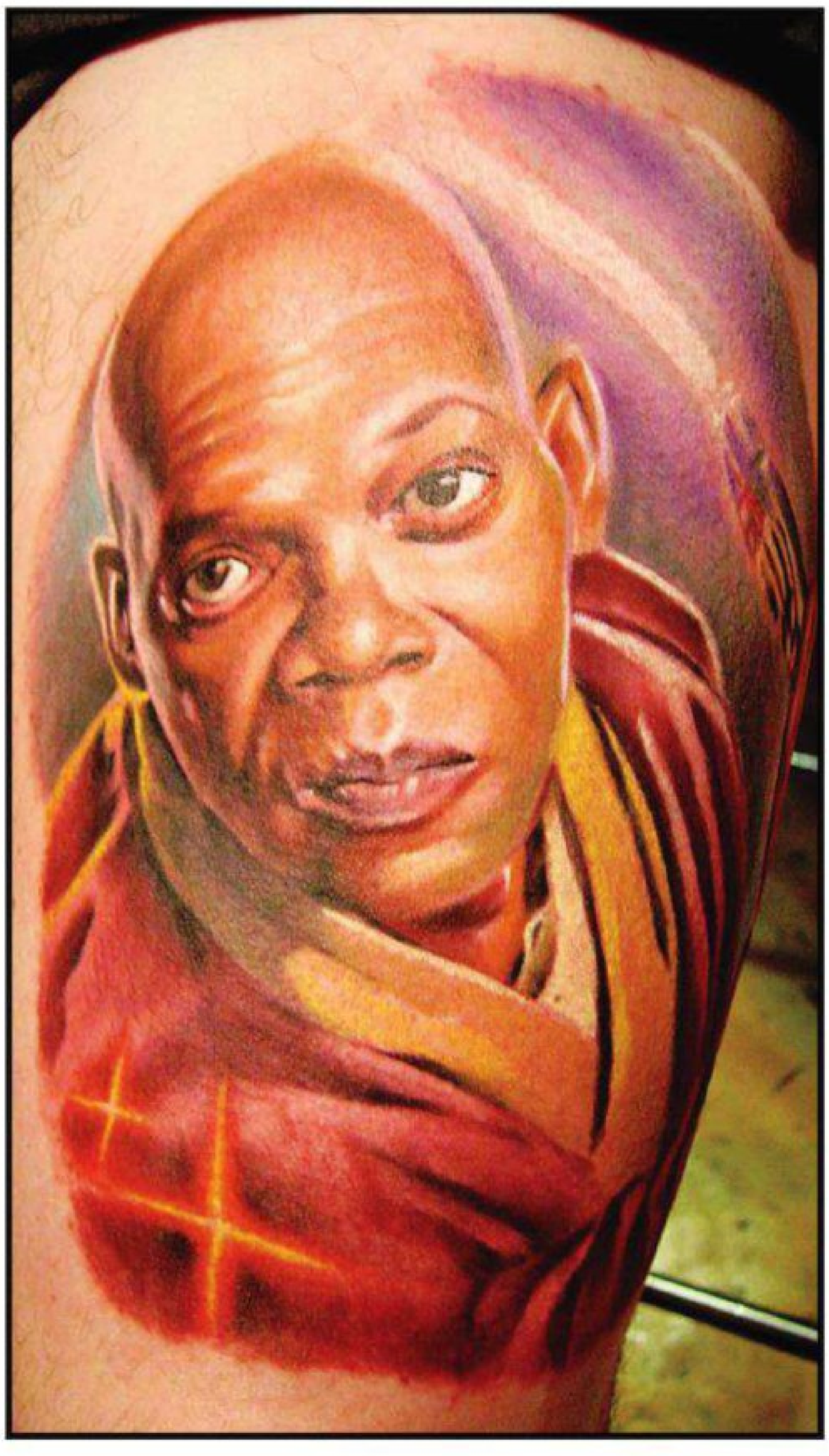


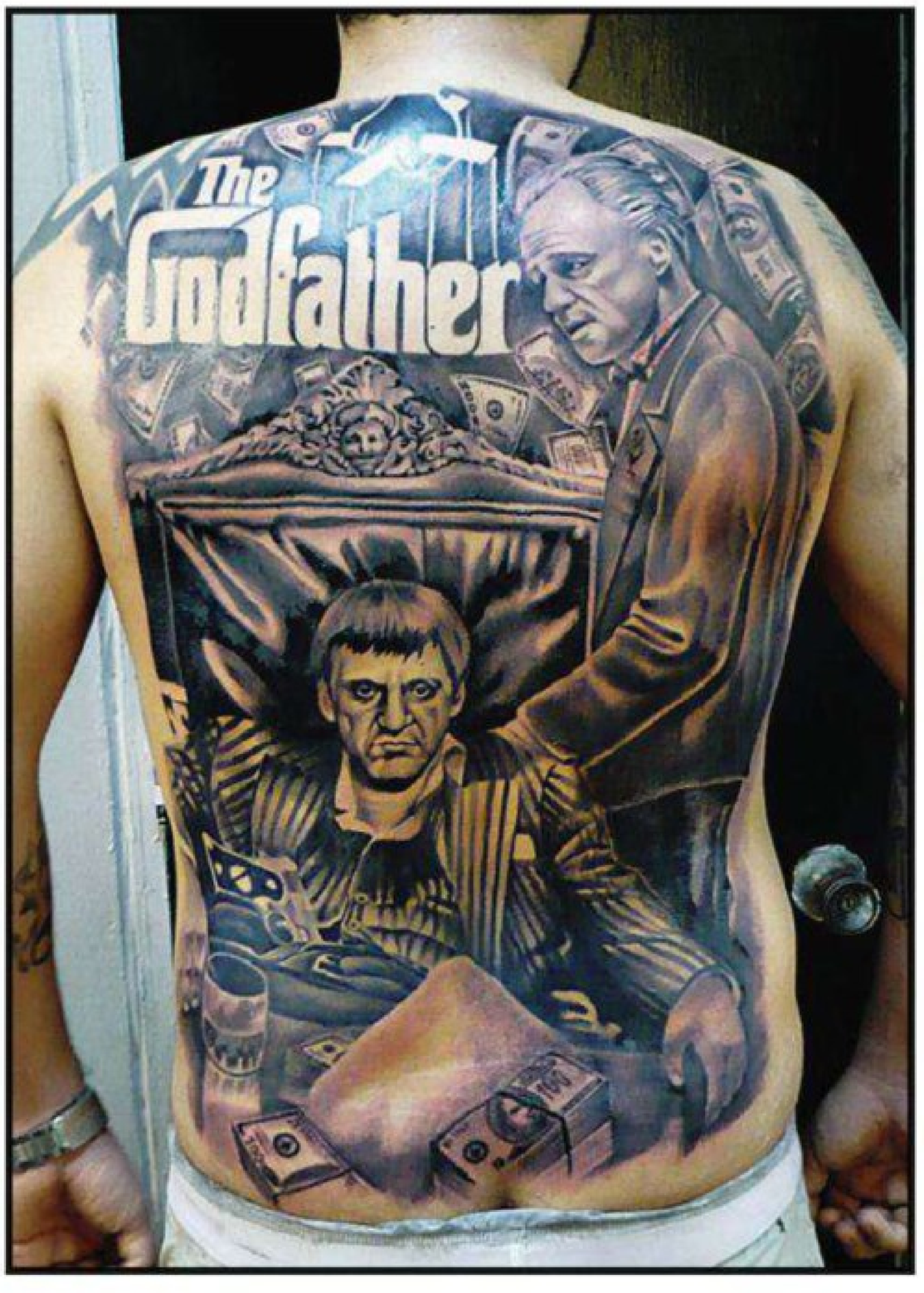
out in Santiago. "There are a lot of styles that I like," he said, "but if I had to choose just one artist that I really admired it may be Jeff Gogue. I like the clarity and the fluency in his work and his pictorial way of tattooing." New Skool artists like Jee Sayalero and Jesse Smith are also inspirations.

Rojas absorbs new knowledge of his craft from artists who he meets in his travels, particularly at conventions and guest spots. Occasionally Leo's lack of tattoos throws off potential clients and even his peers within the tattoo community. However, anyone who meets Rojas can quickly discern this artist's devotion to his craft. His art speaks volumes in testimony to this fact. In the years since he picked up a tattoo machine, Rojas has been consumed by tattooing. There's no doubt in Leo Rojas' mind that that commitment to tattoo art will be unwavering in the years to come. "I will be tattooing while my hands can withstand the weight of the tattoo machine," he said. Rojas is grateful that he has the opportunity to do what he loves. "I just want to say thanks to the people who believe in my work and support the big world of tattoo."

Leo Rojas can be found on Facebook and MySpace (www.myspace.com/leo_rojas) or on Flicker (or www.flickr.com/leo-rojas).





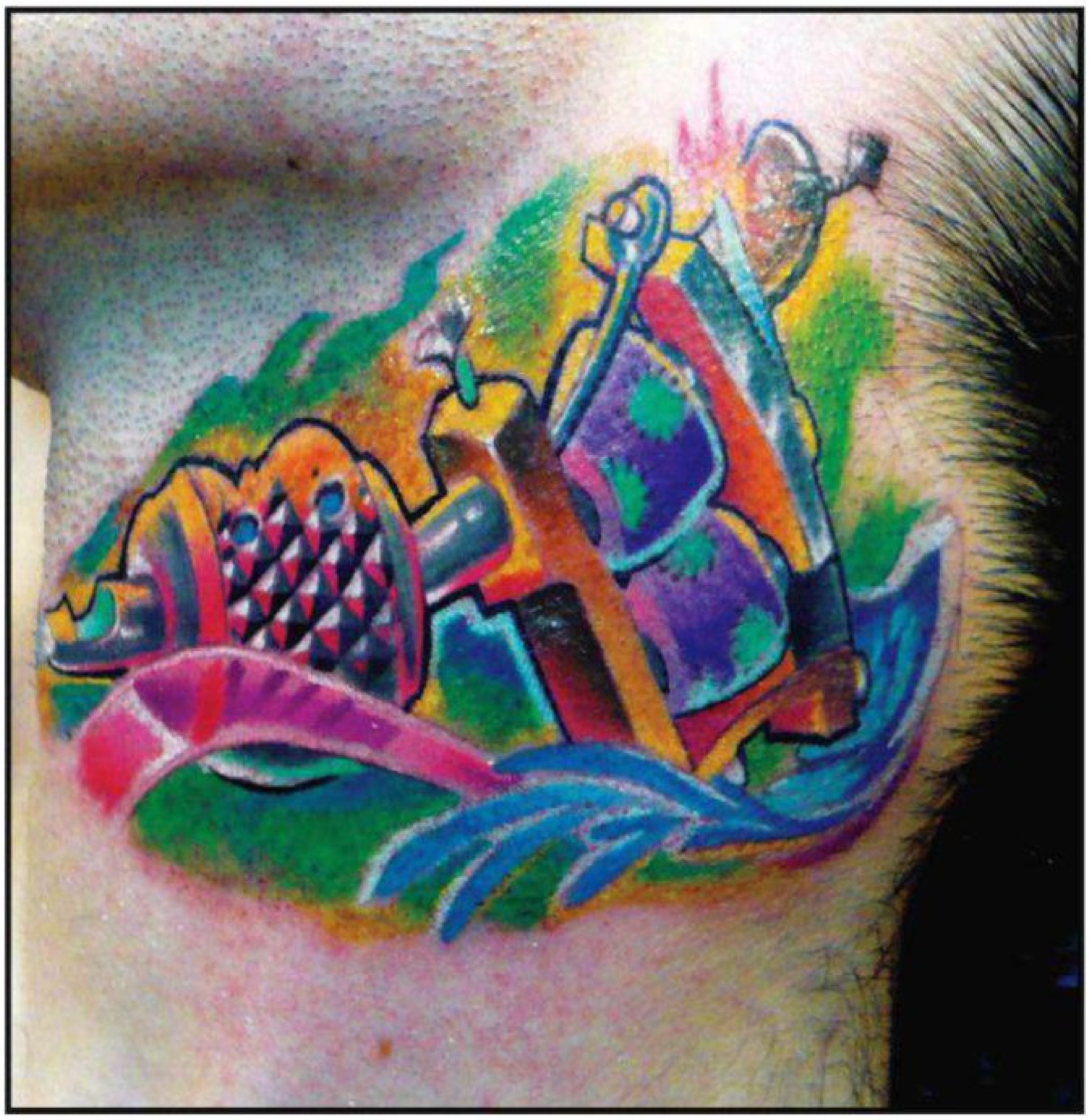


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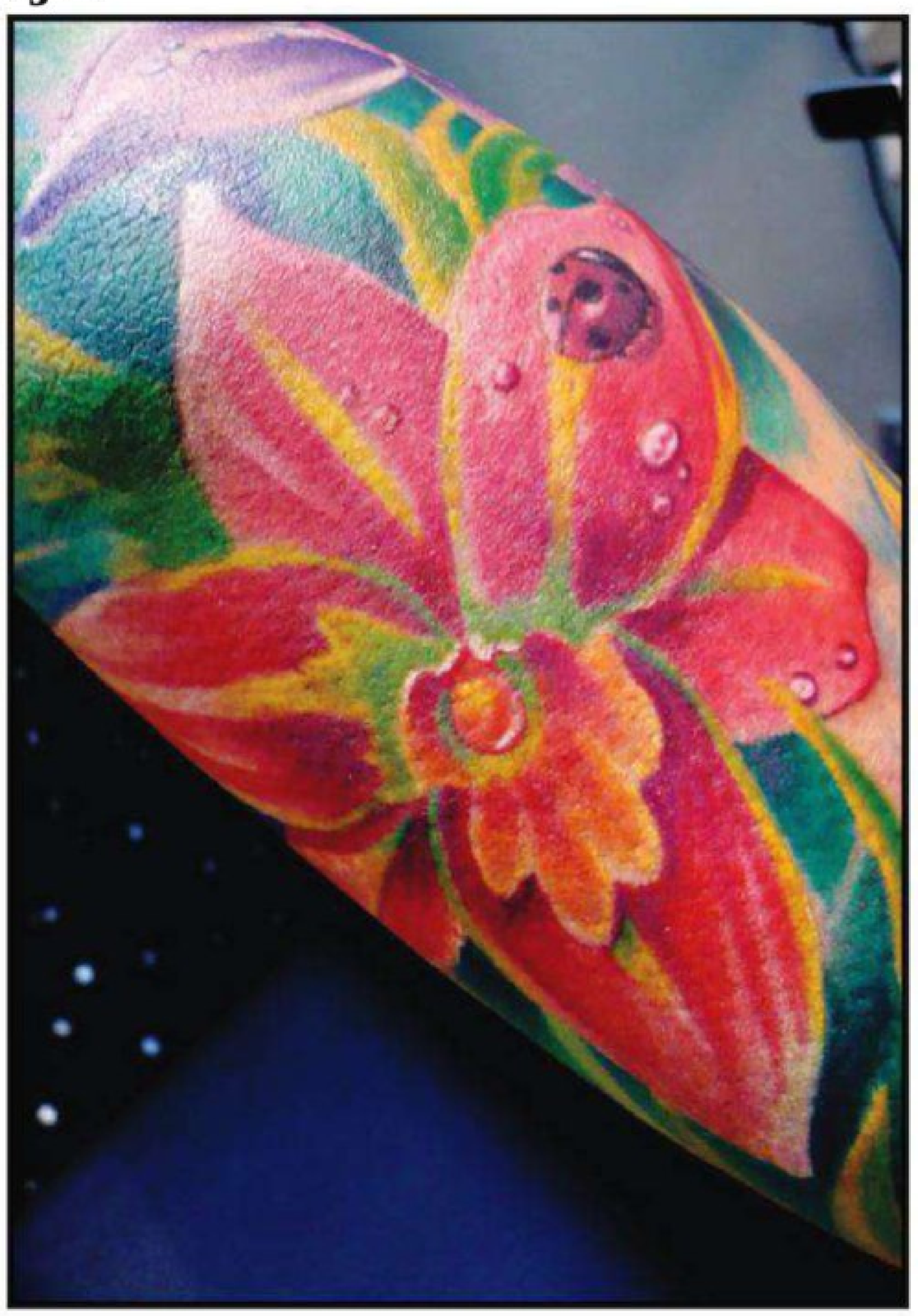


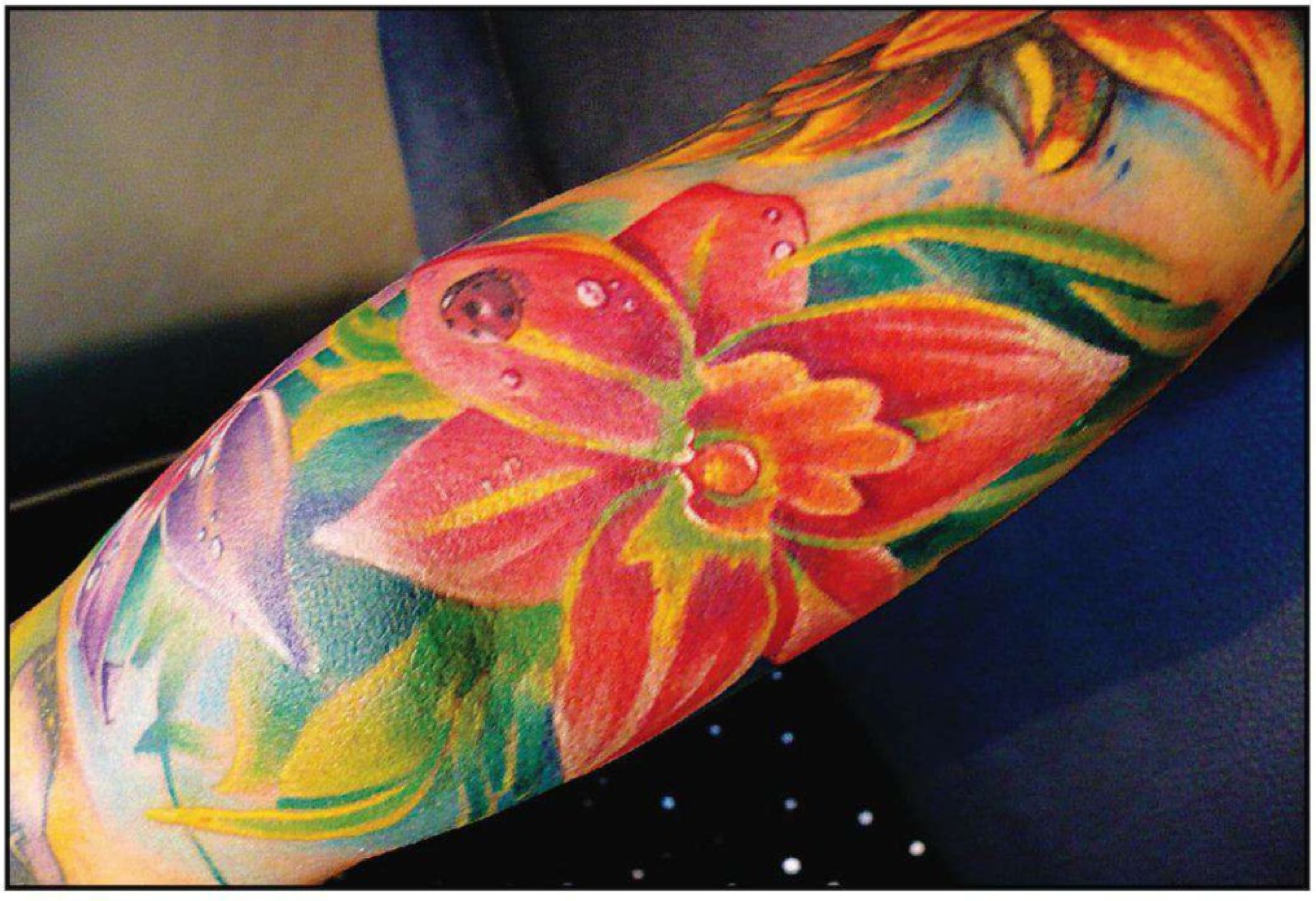
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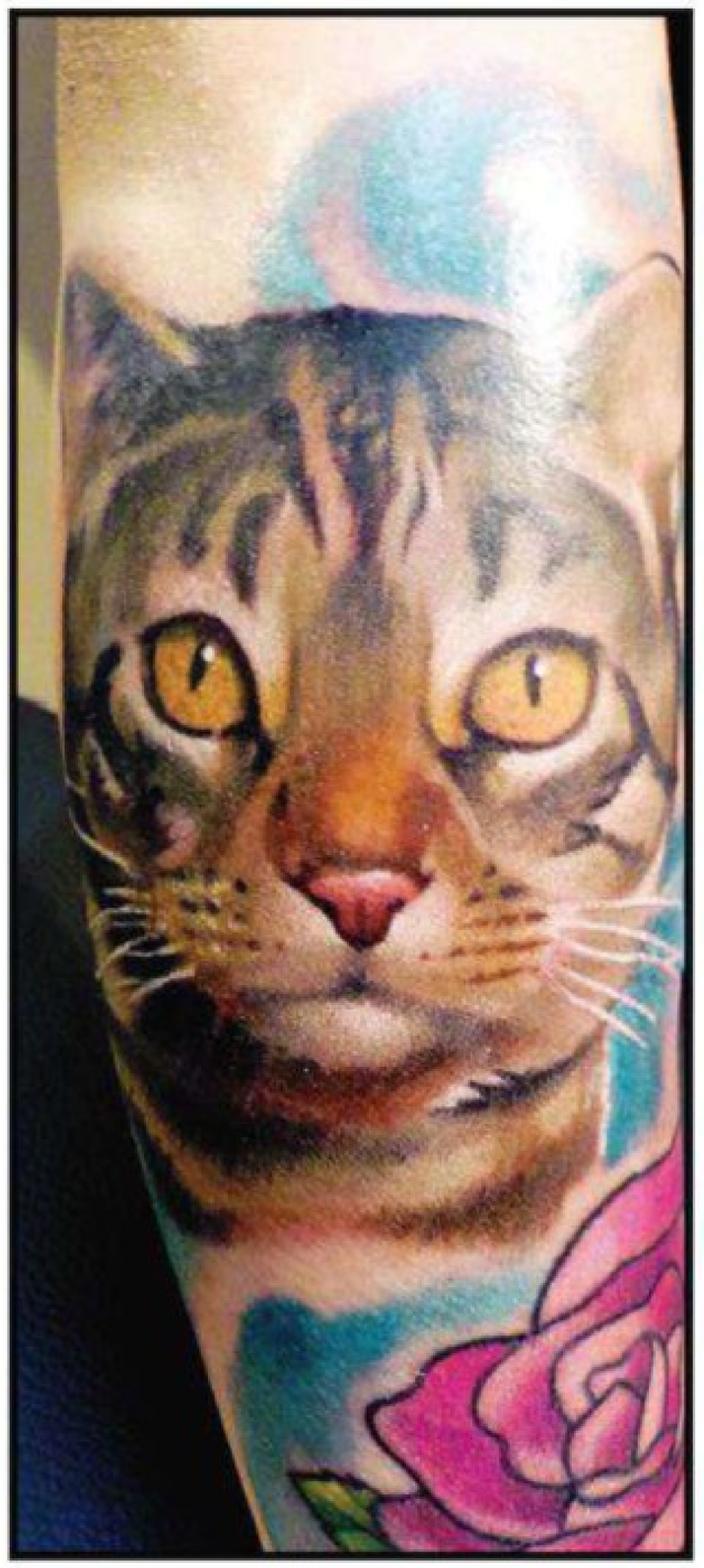
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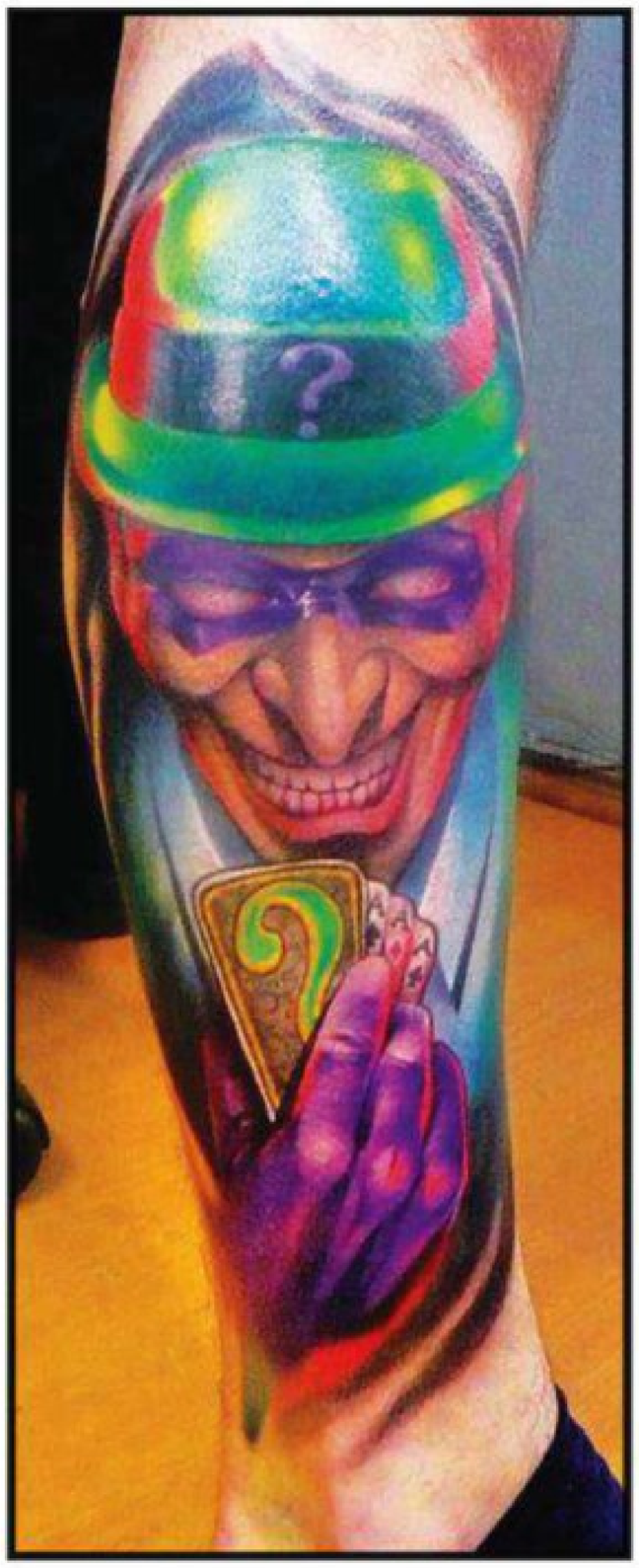




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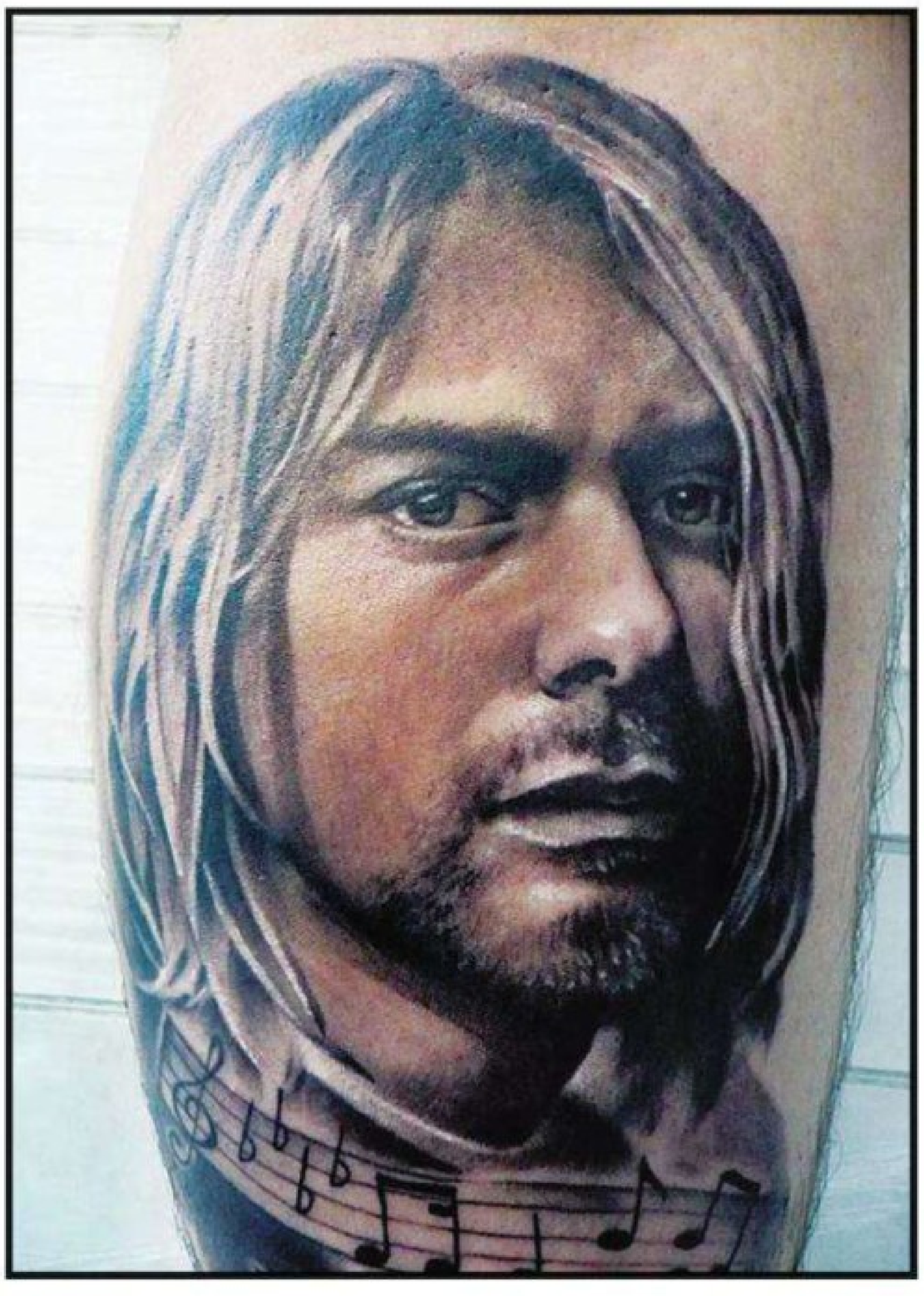
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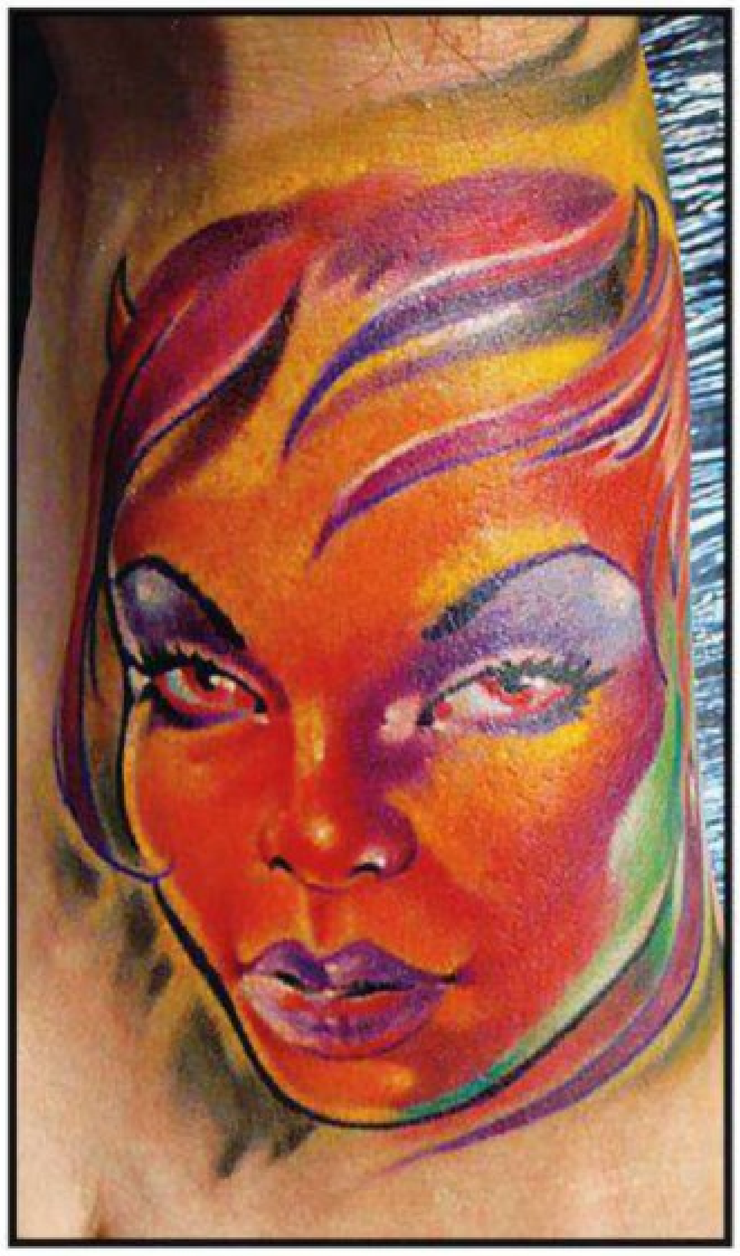






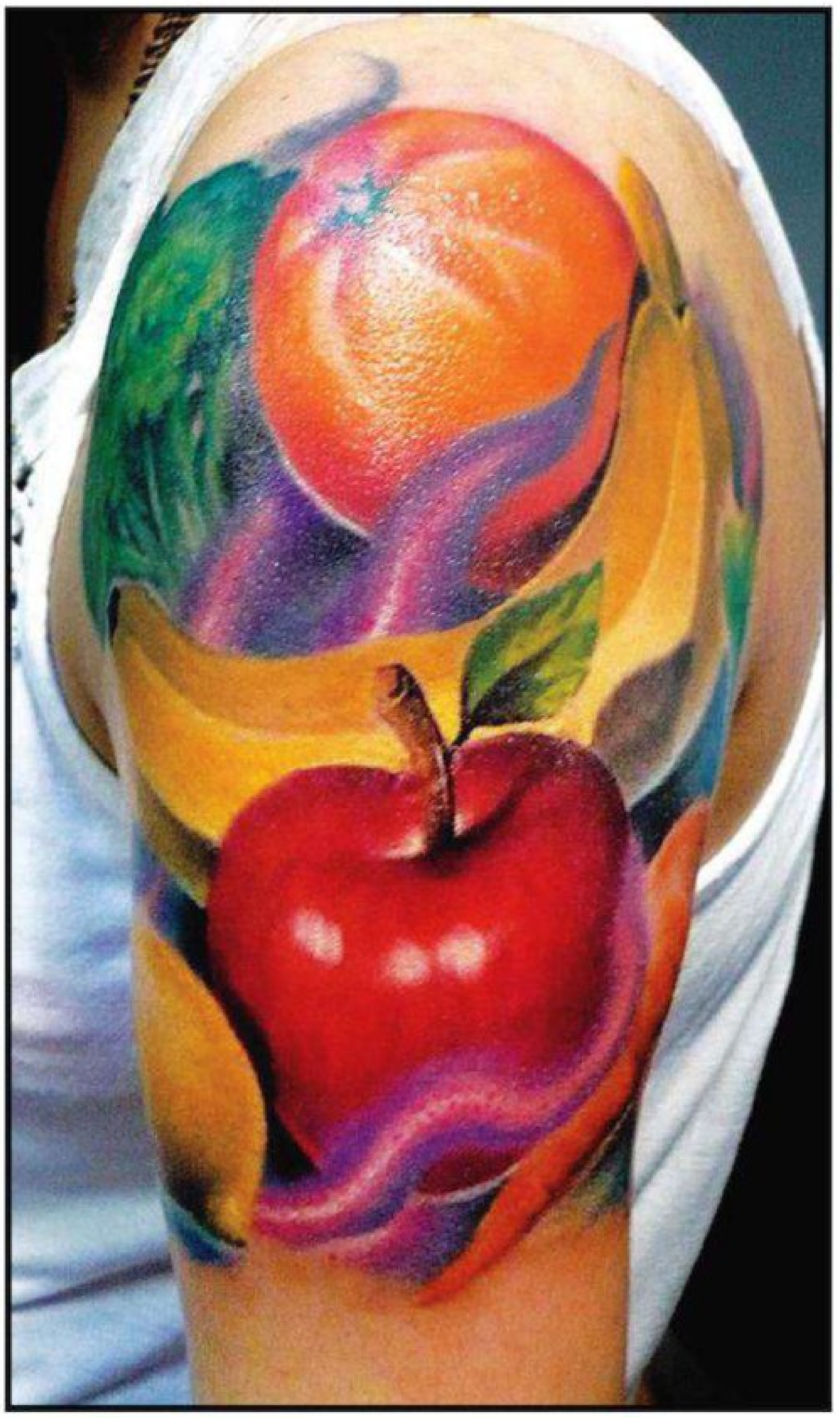
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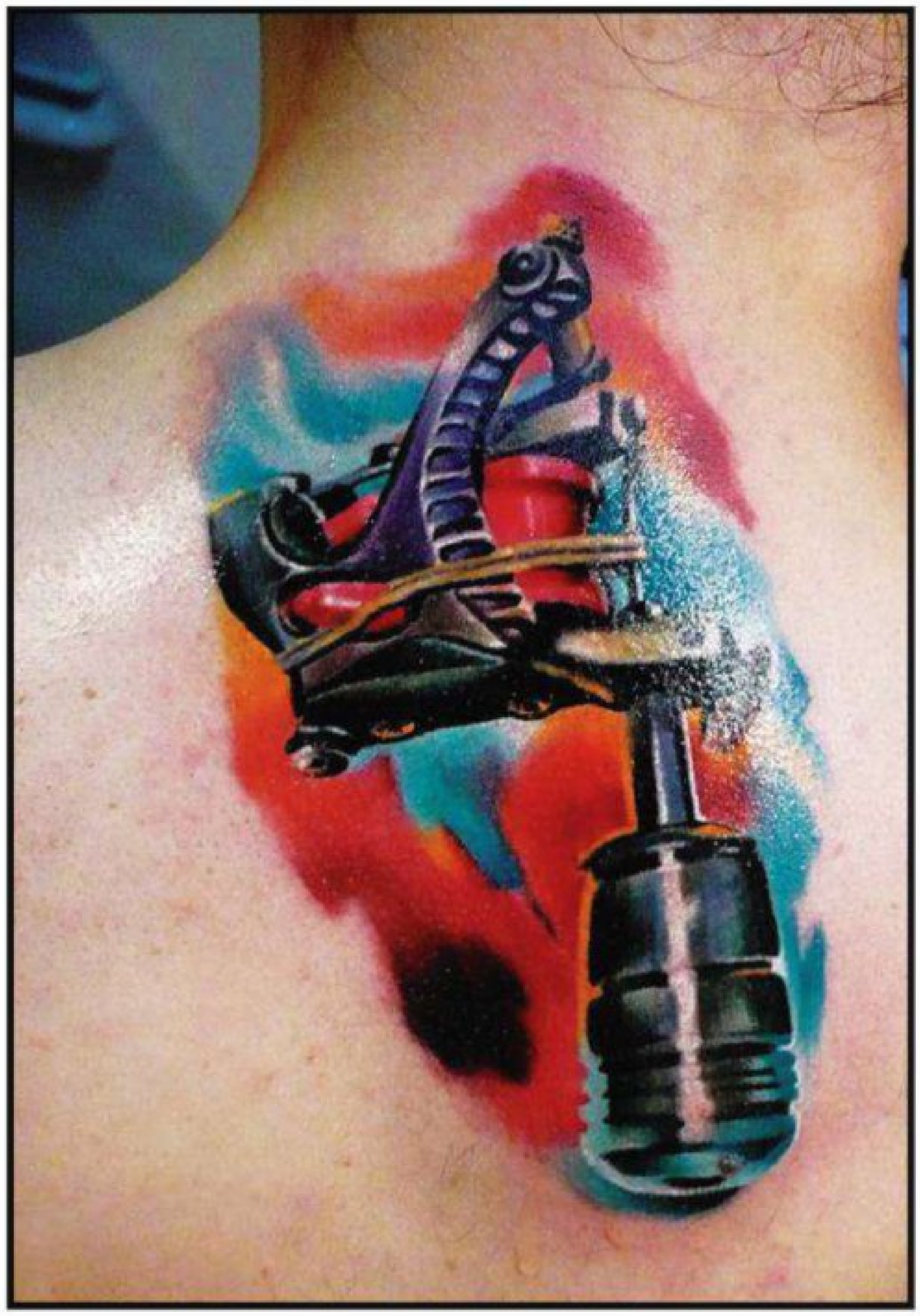






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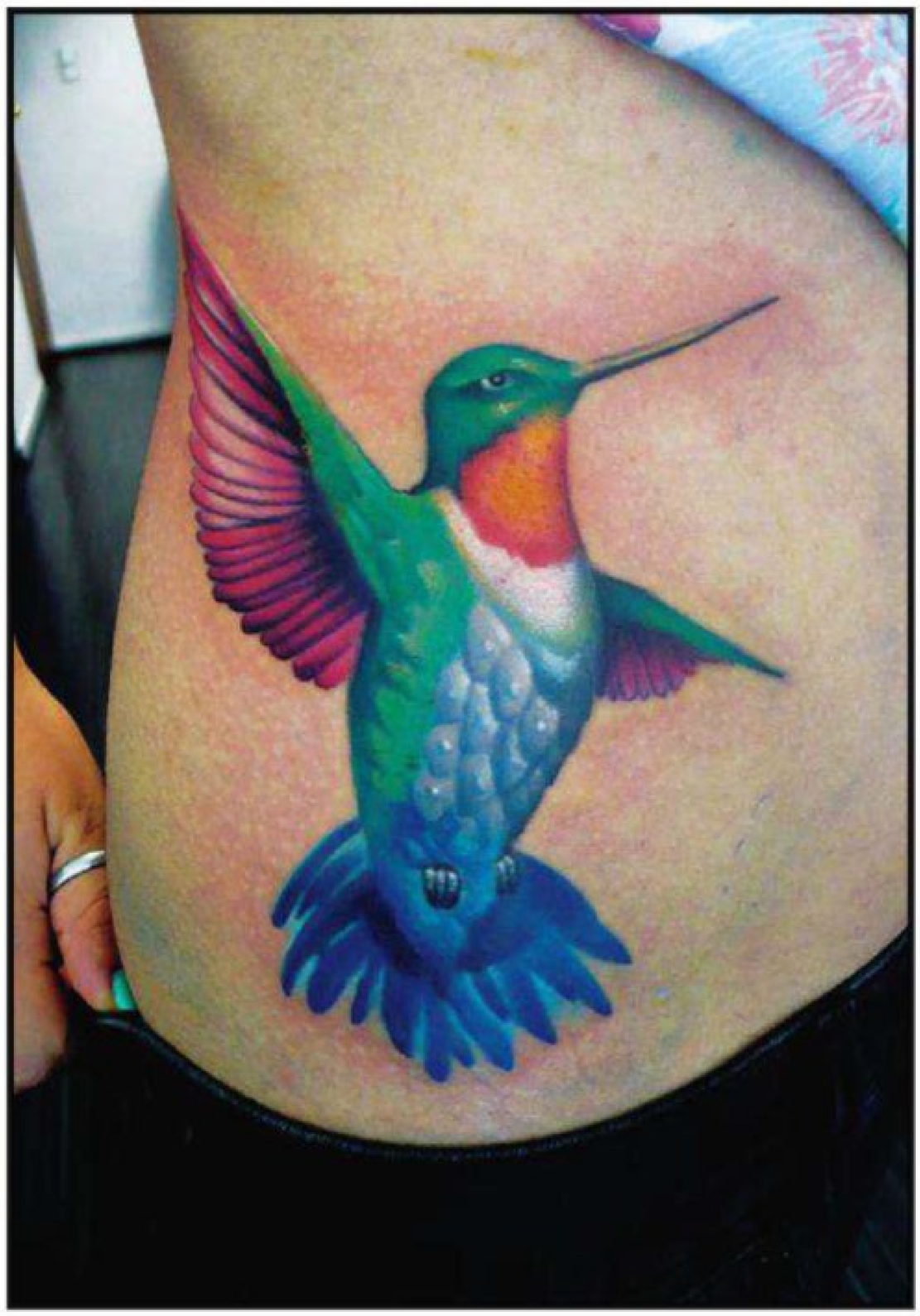




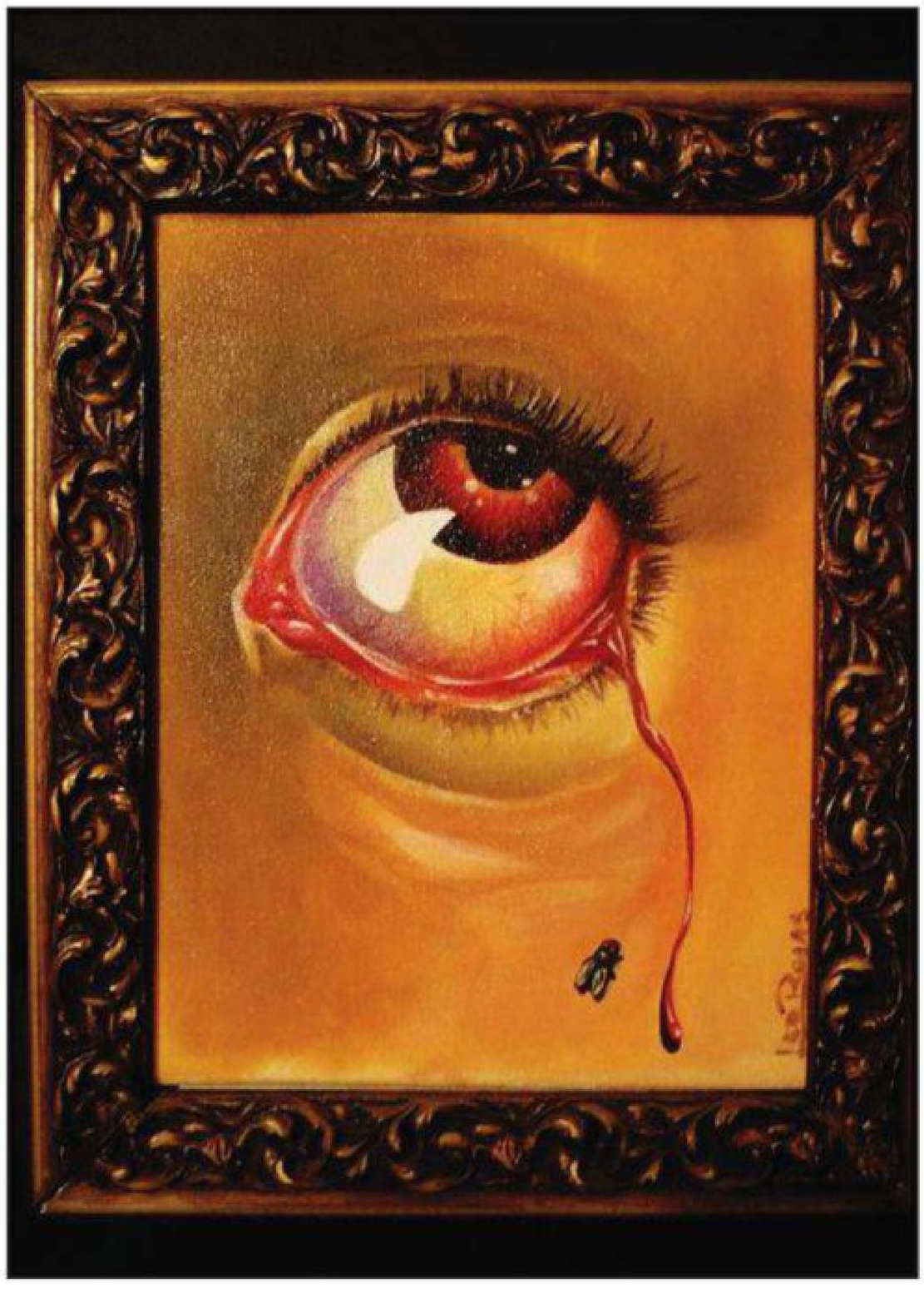


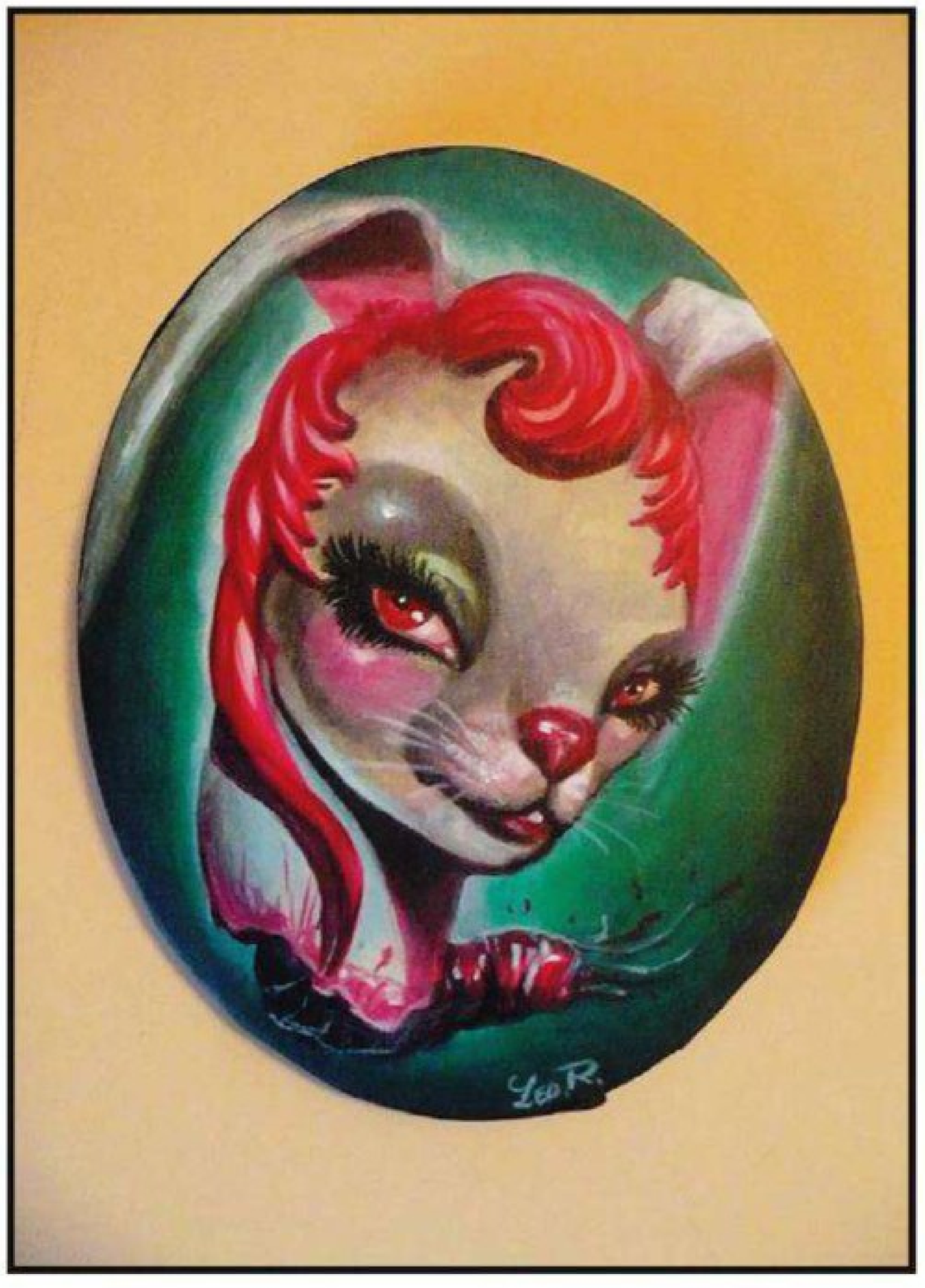


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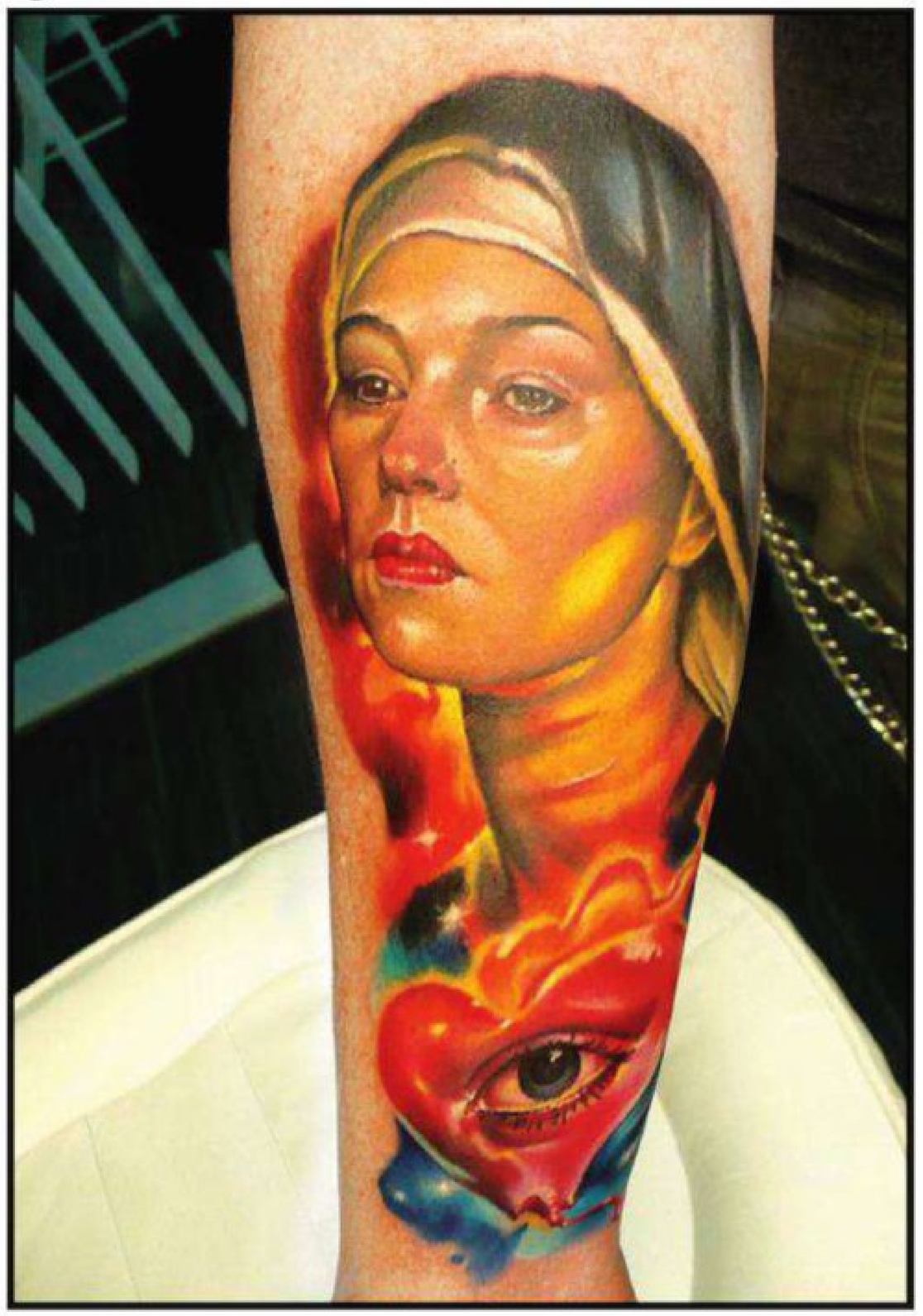
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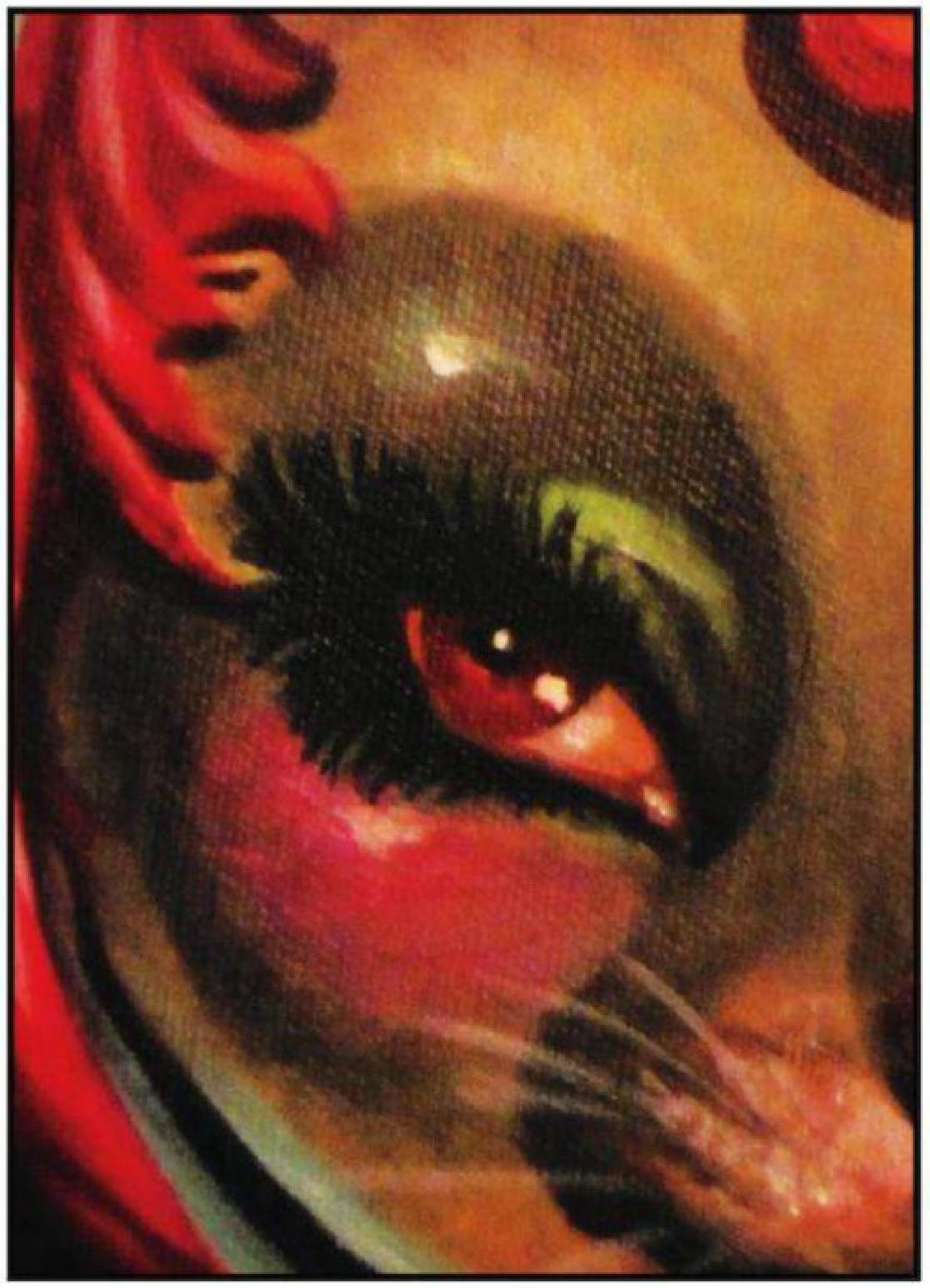
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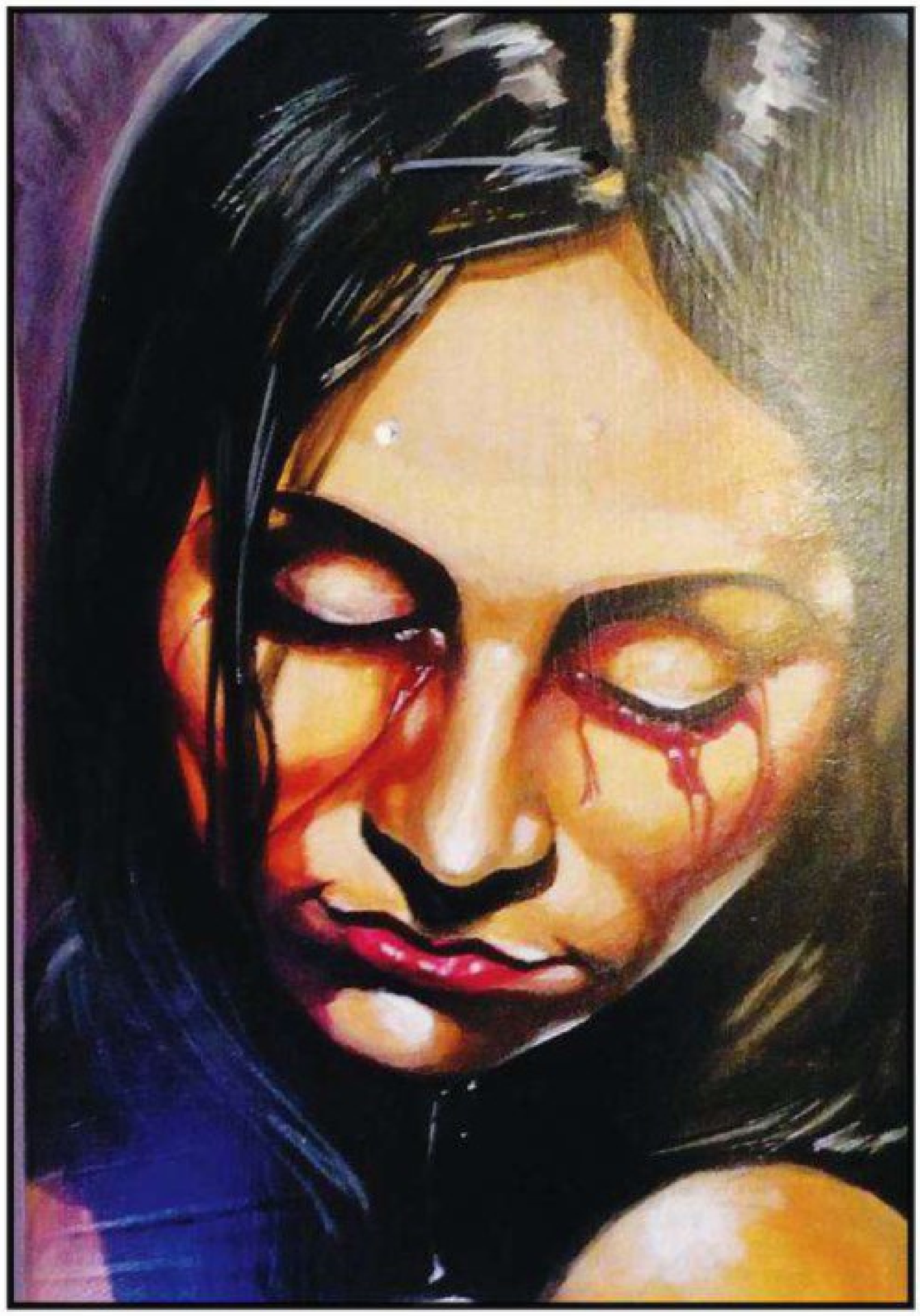
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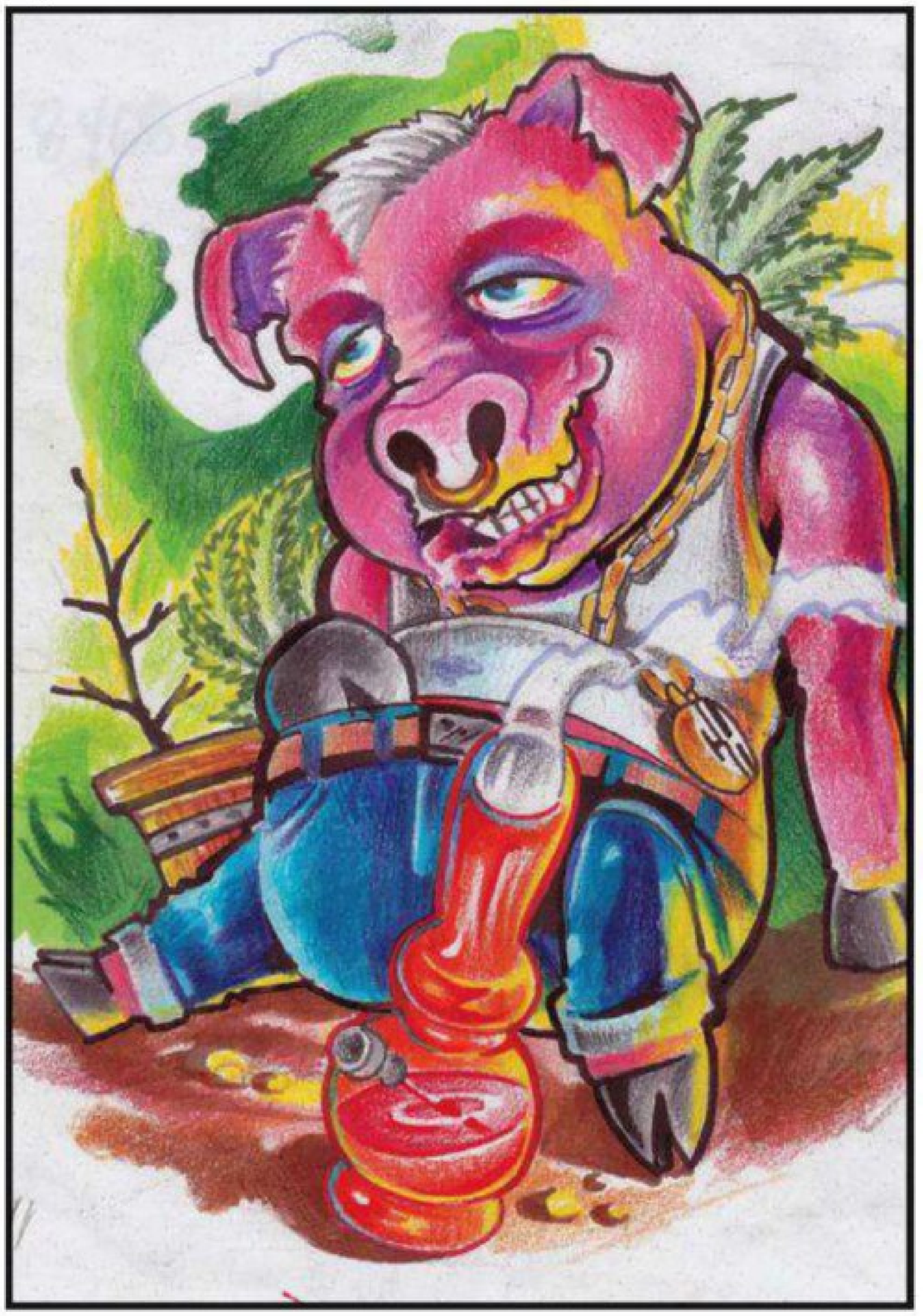






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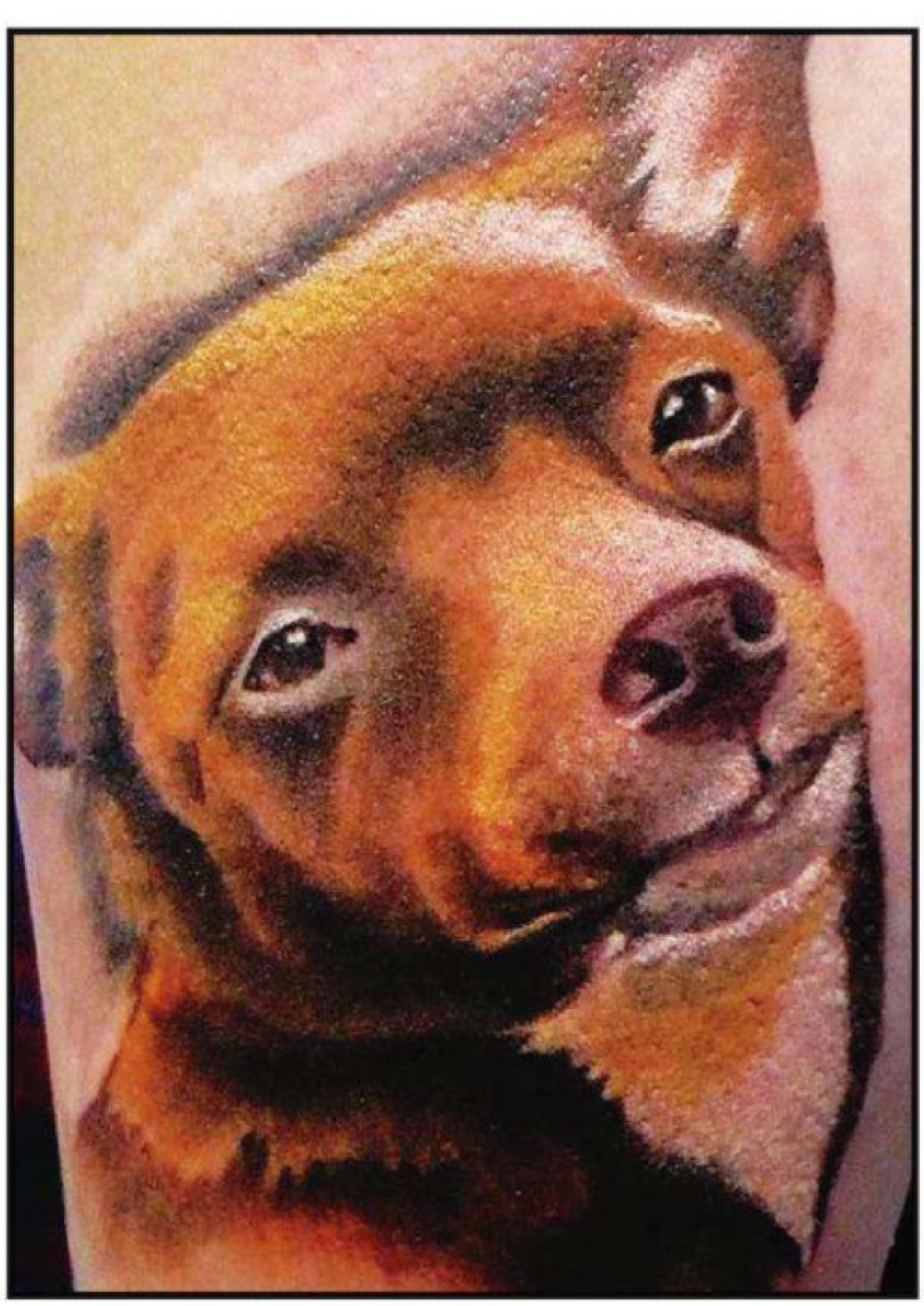


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ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Tattoo tripping with Ryan Cooper Thompson

By Amanda Stephan

For Ryan Cooper Thompson, some of the most compelling elements of existence can be found traveling the open road. According to Thompson, too many people ignore the lure of the highway. "Aside from making adventures for myself traveling, I'm not really a 'fun' guy," he said. "I'm not a rock star. I don't drink. I've never been to a strip club. I really don't care much about having a social life at all. I own the series box set for the TV show 'Friends' if you need proof just how lame I am." Thompson's quest for authenticity frequently guides him to the road, and it's also guided him through most other aspects of life.

Thompson spent his youth in various cities throughout Illinois, from a small town of just 500 people to the bustling metropolitan area of Chicago. His mother was a graphic designer, and the household was full of her paintings. "One of my earliest memories with her and art is doing color chart exercises with watercolors when I was maybe six years old," he said. "She really spent time with my brother and me to teach us the fundamentals early on."

Thompson furthered his interest in art by taking classes during high school. Then he bounced around to a few different colleges and ended up at the University of Springfield, pursuing a degree in art. His college studies focused on painting, but it was during this period that Thompson began focusing on tattoo. Once he honed in on tattooing, Thompson quickly lost interest in school. Eventually, with little time or interest in classes, Thompson dropped out with just nine hours to go for his degree.

Thompson began his tattoo career seven years ago at New Age Tattoos in Springfield, Ill. However, Springfield didn't present him with an inspiring environment. "Springfield is one of those towns where there are roads, houses, trees, Walmart, McDonald's, and Starbucks; nothing really special," he said. "They love franchises. It would be the talk of the town if they were getting an Olive Garden, but rarely did they support anything mom and pop."

He decided to move to Kansas City, Missouri, where the cost of living is low and there are lots of interesting things

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RYAN COOPER THOMPSON





to do and see. He took a chair at Freaks on Broadway, a shop whose reputation he already knew. "It's an awesome shop with a great crew and now I'm proud to be part of it," he said. "Everyone has something they can learn from each other here."

One might suppose that Thompson's co-workers learn from his drive to be authentic, if they don't already share this ideology. The need to experience something and convey that experience in art is somewhat of a requirement for the tattooist. He appreciated this quality very early in his creative exploration. A formal artist who had a huge impact on Thompson was Paul Klee, best known for his Cubist style and "childlike" painting illustrations. "Some of these people today show up and just start throwing paint around and call it 'abstract,'" Thompson said. "I don't think that they understand that the masters of abstract understood and developed the fundamentals of composition, color theory, reference of realism, etc. before applying their knowledge and exploring the realm of abstract art and minimalism. Paul Klee mastered technique before spending a lifetime regressing back to a point where he could draw like a child again and make it believable. That, to me, demonstrates true understanding in the purpose of what you are doing."

Thompson believed that this same philosophy can be applied to tattooing. He agrees with the assertion that American Traditional teaches tattooists the fundamentals of the application of tattooing. However, he doesn't believe that artists should just start drawing or tattooing these traditional images without having a clear understanding of these designs. "The fathers of American Traditional didn't just draw the things they did without reason," he said. "They saw things in real life and translated it into something tattoo-able. If you reference from real life, then your illustration will be much more believable. I think it's fairly obvious when you see a tattooer's work that understands this relationship, versus someone who is just trying to mimic traditional designs."

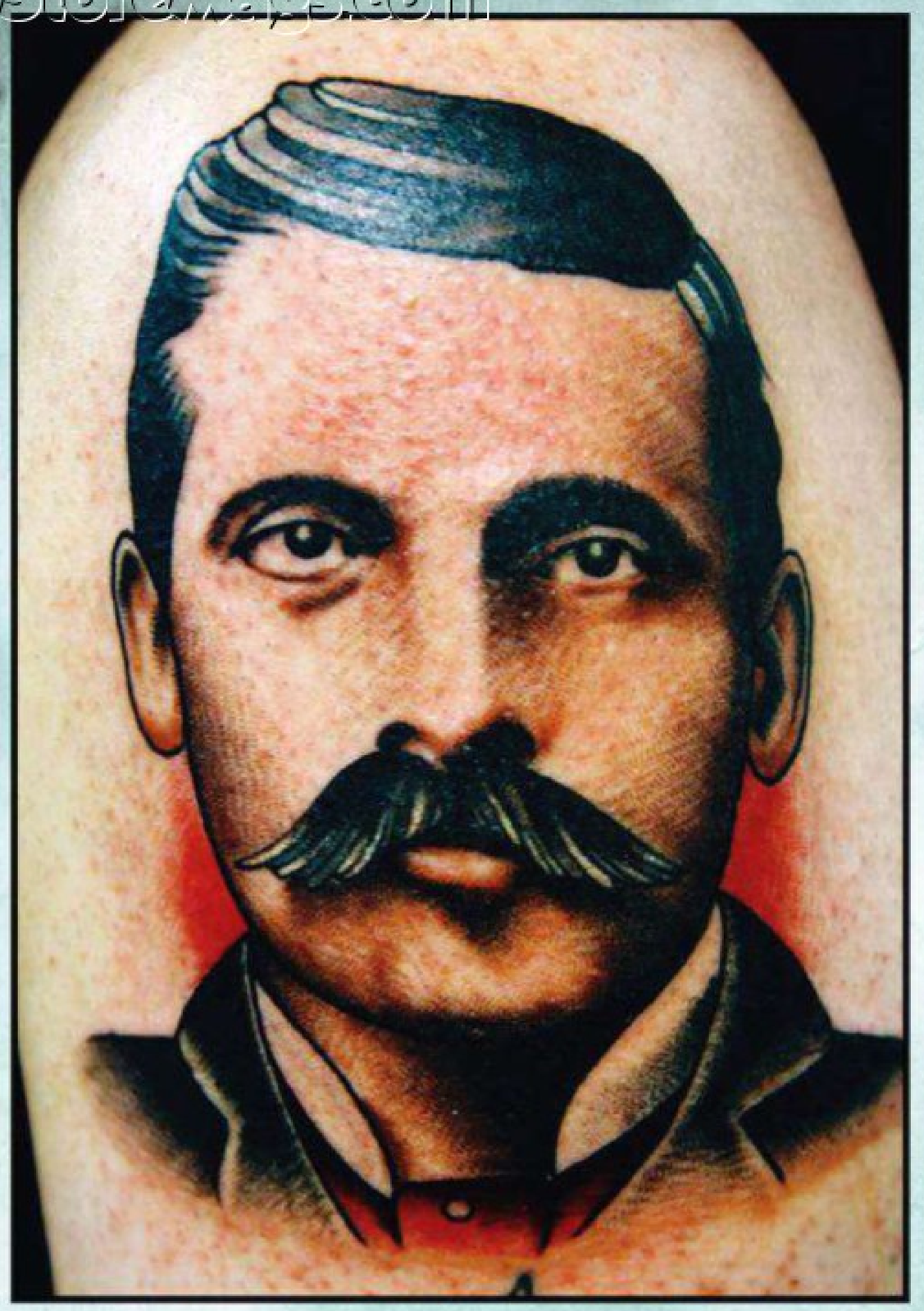
Although Thompson has firm beliefs concerning art and life, he doesn't approach his job with a closed mind. He does not try to adhere to a specific theme with the tattoo art that he creates; instead he is guided by the belief that because tattoos are a commissioned work, the theme and design should be dictated by the client. He does have a tattoo style that he likes best, and it's one that most artists can appreciate. "I just like bold, high-contrast tattoos with a minimal color palette," he said. "I believe if you want to work in a medium then you should understand and enjoy that medium for its unique qualities and application. If you are interested in qualities outside that medium, then work with a different medium."

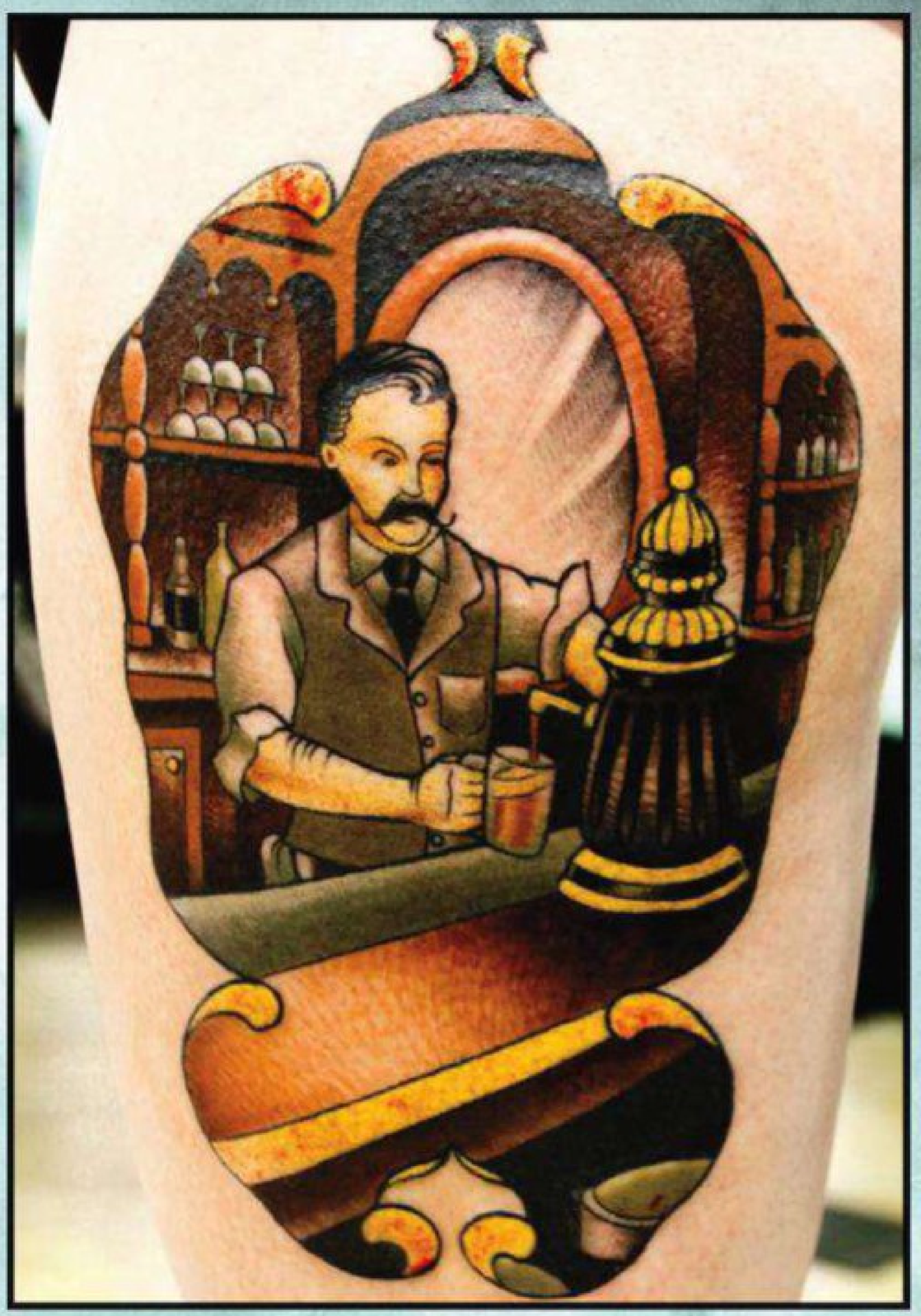
Professionally, Ryan Cooper Thompson won't be working in another medium anytime soon. This year he'll be on the floor at the St. Louis convention and numerous guest spots around the country. "I guest spot at a few places around Illinois regularly," he said, "Freedom Ink, Artkore Tattoo, New Age Tattoos. My cousin opened a shop in Phoenix that I will be visiting sometime in the near future." He is eager for the opportunity to visit new cities and new studios. The road is calling.

Contact Ryan Cooper Thompson via his website, www.ryancooperthompson.com.

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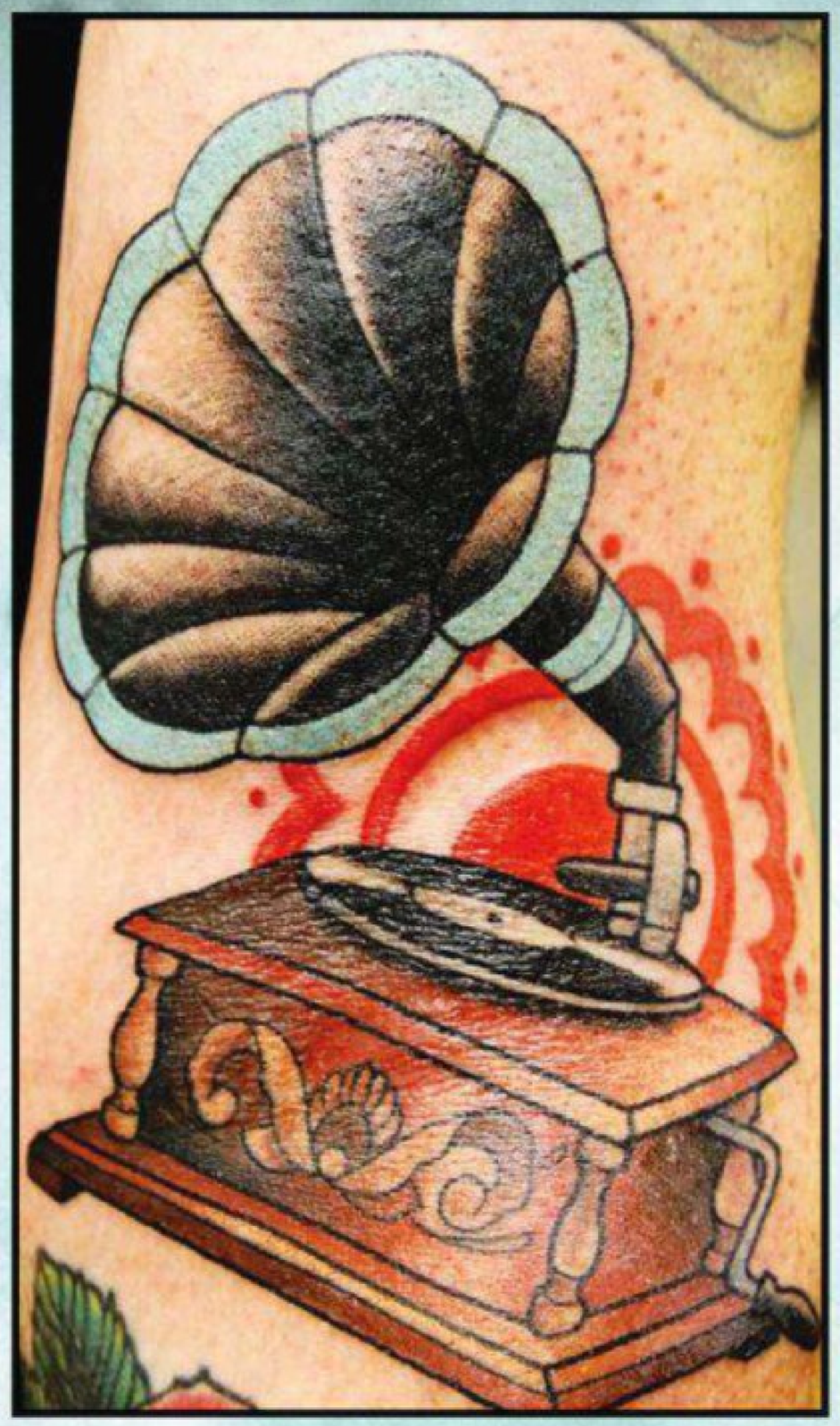
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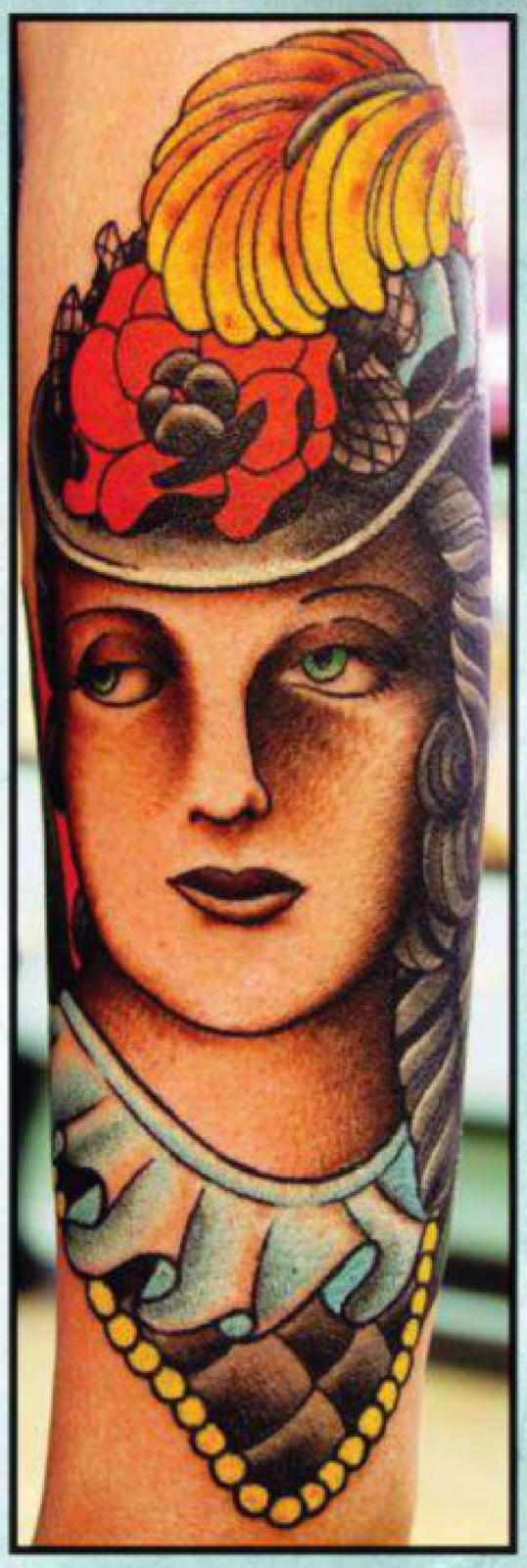






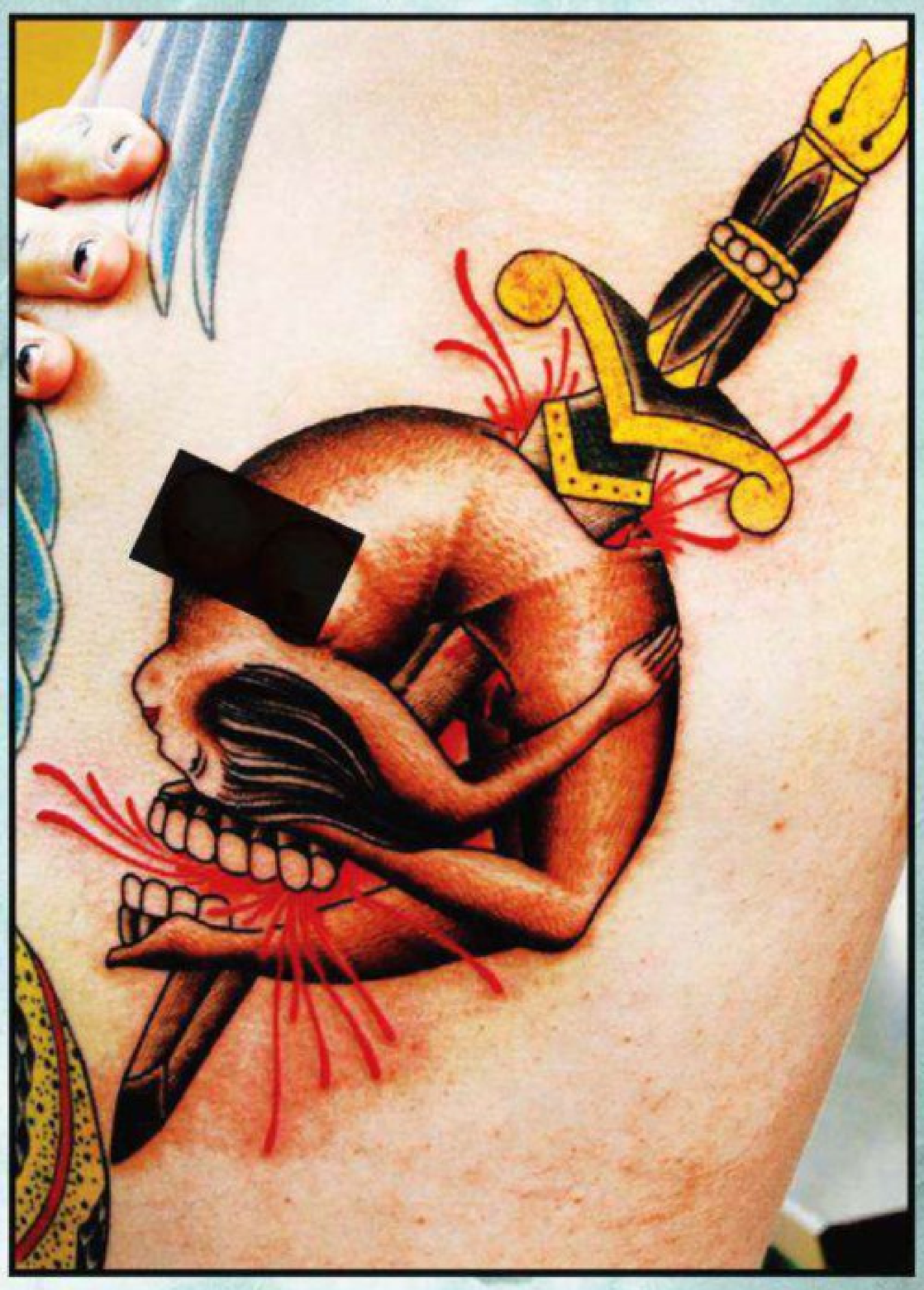
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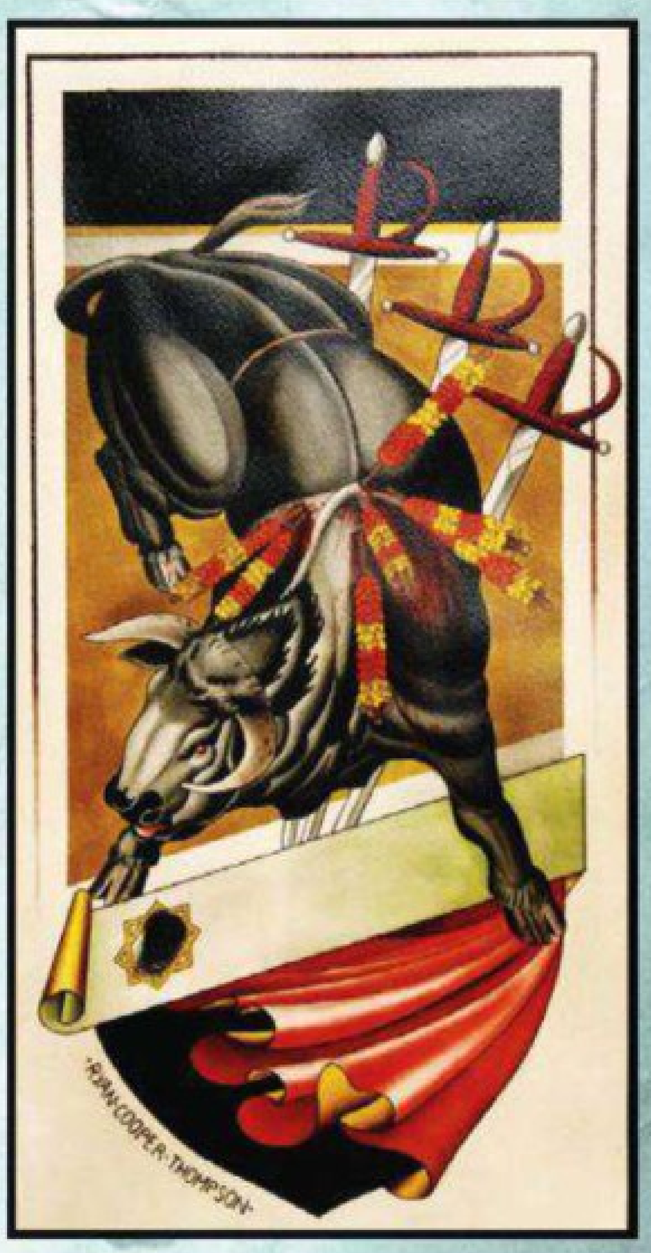


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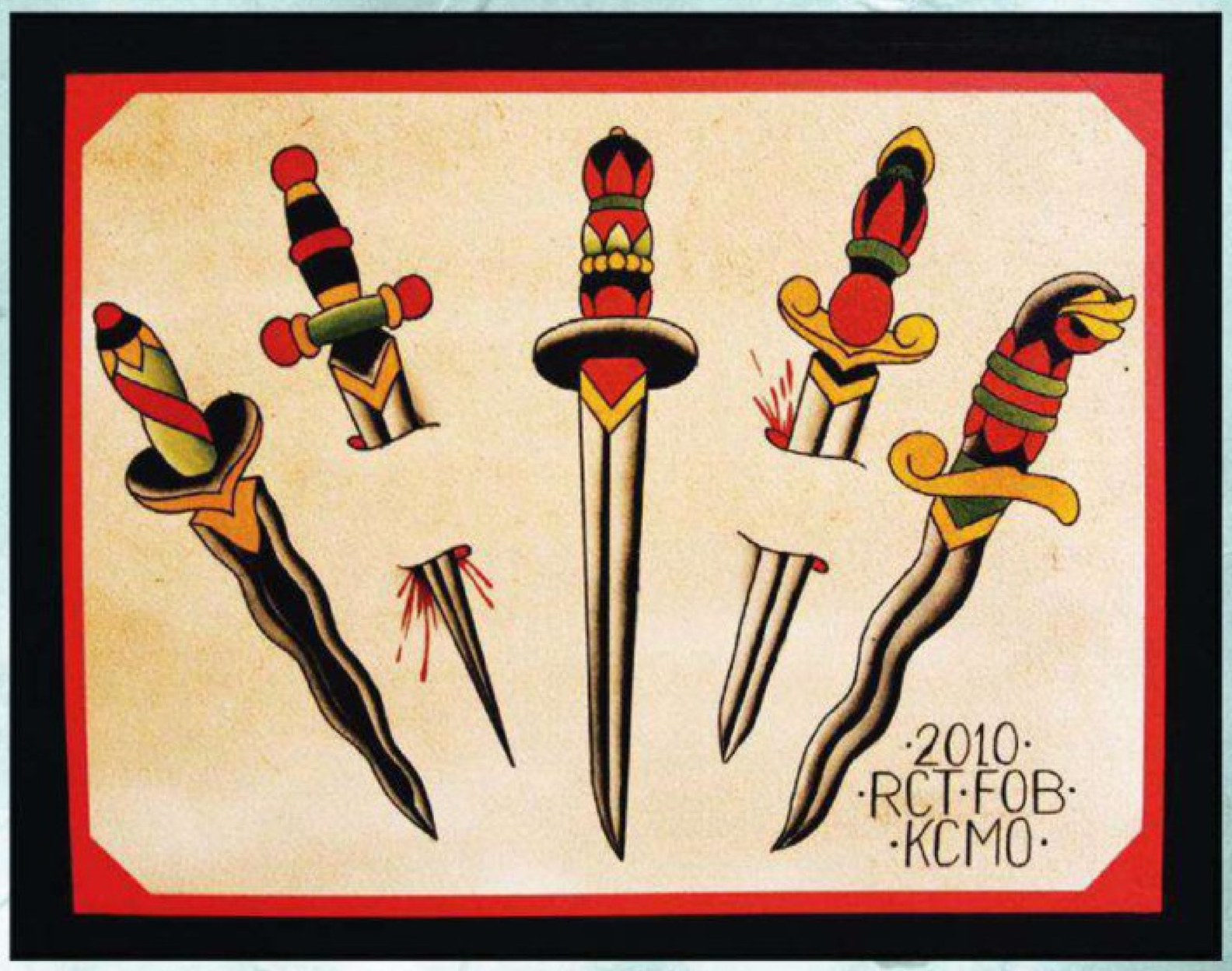
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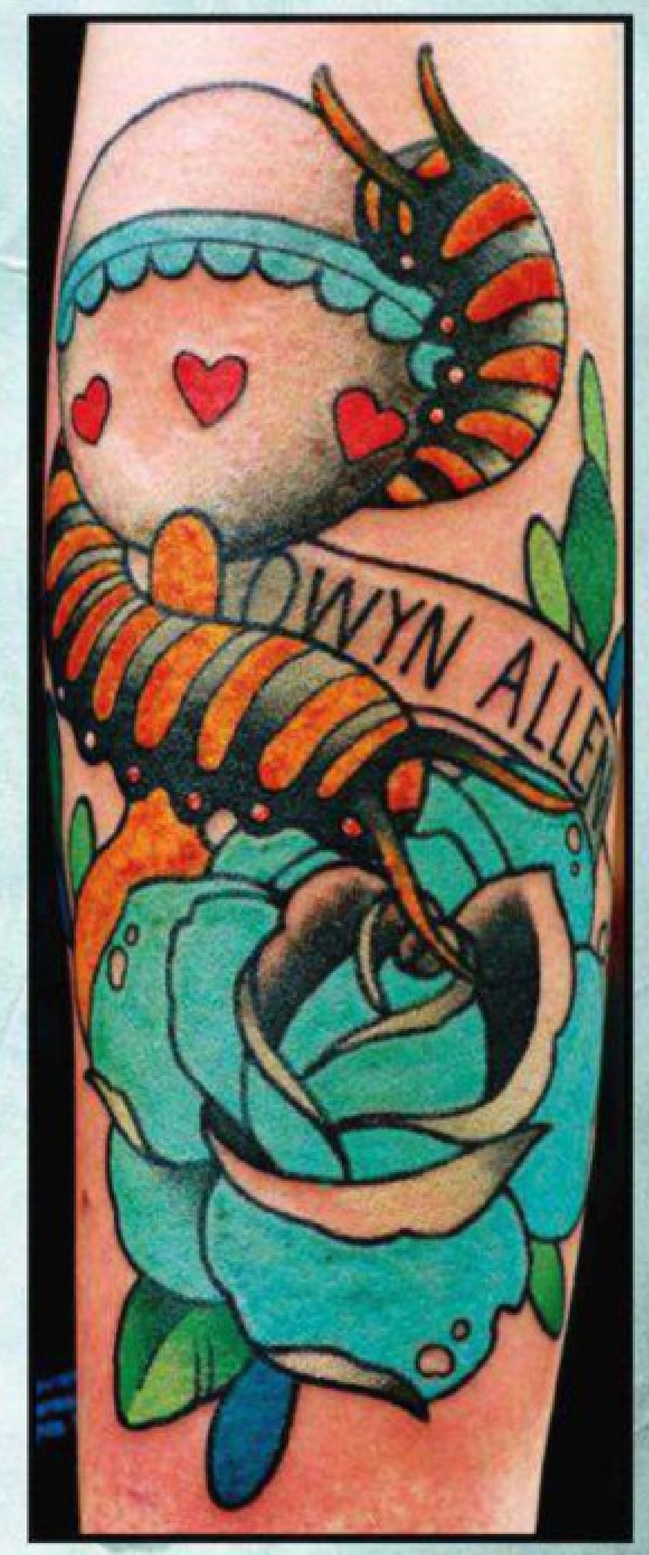
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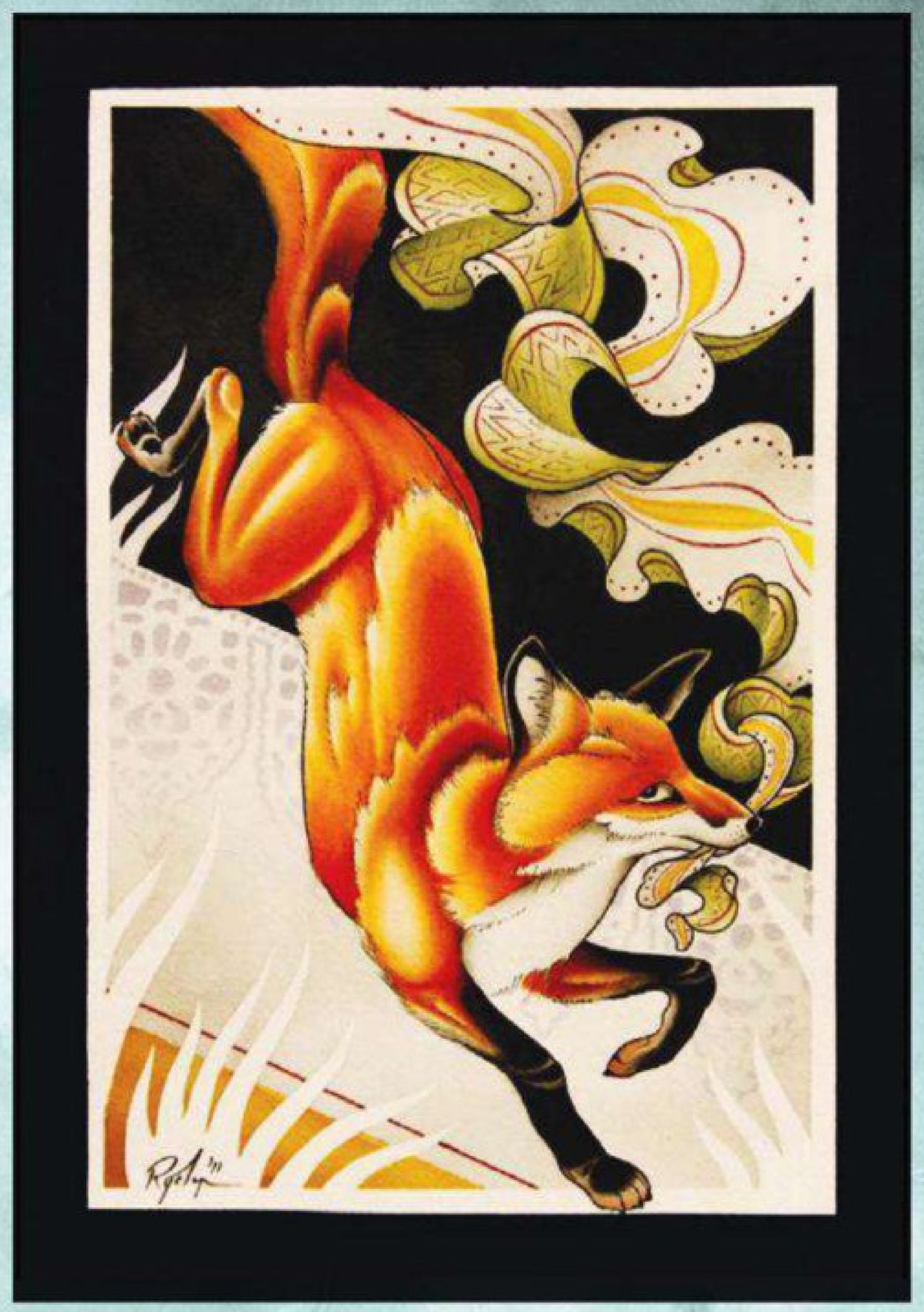






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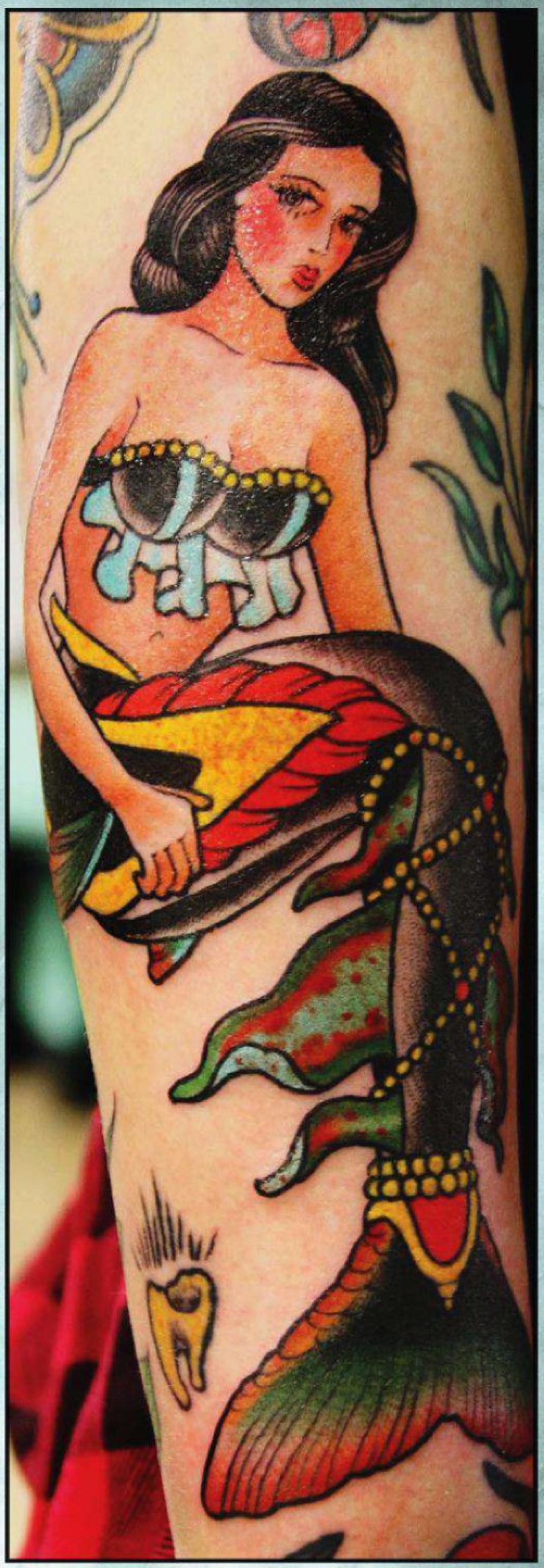


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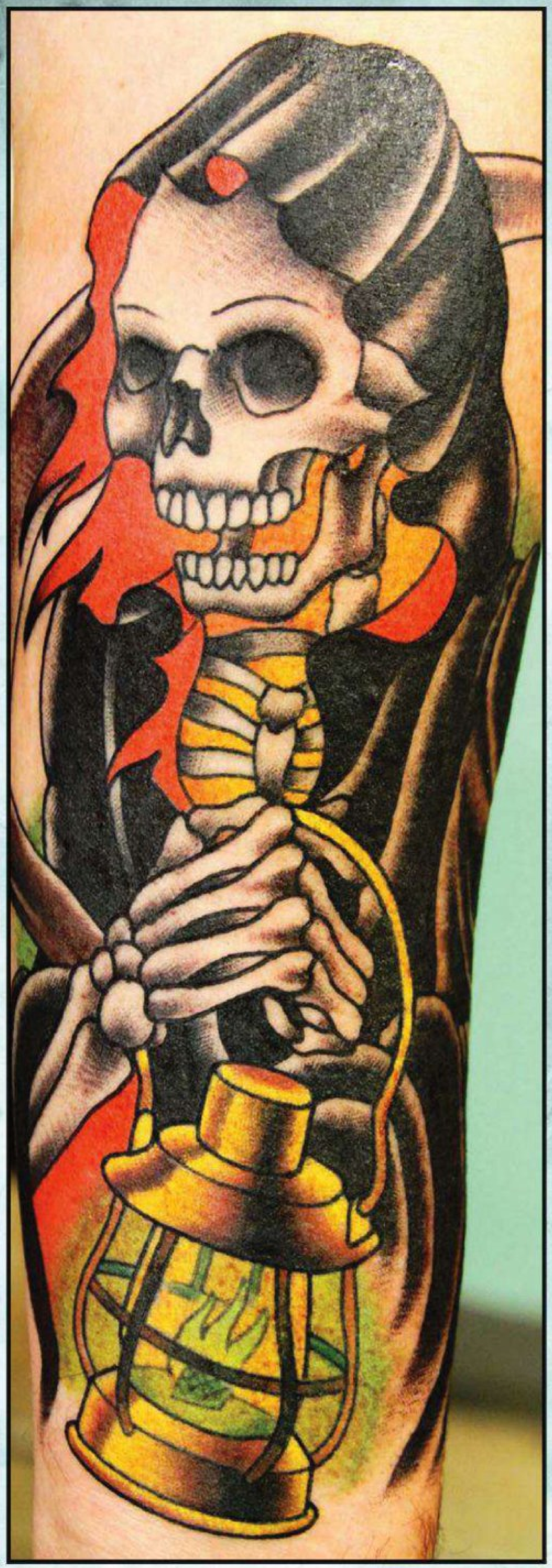


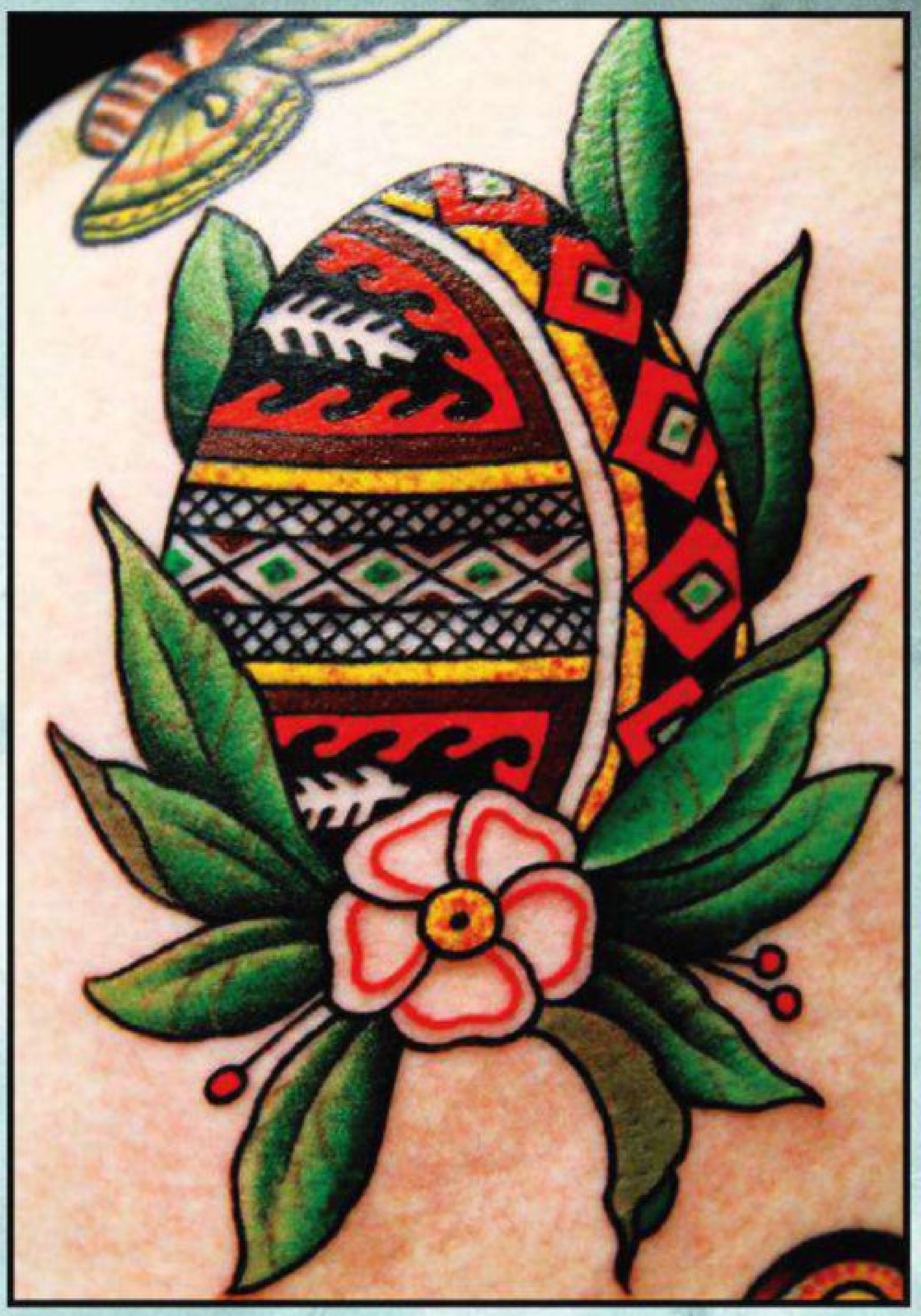


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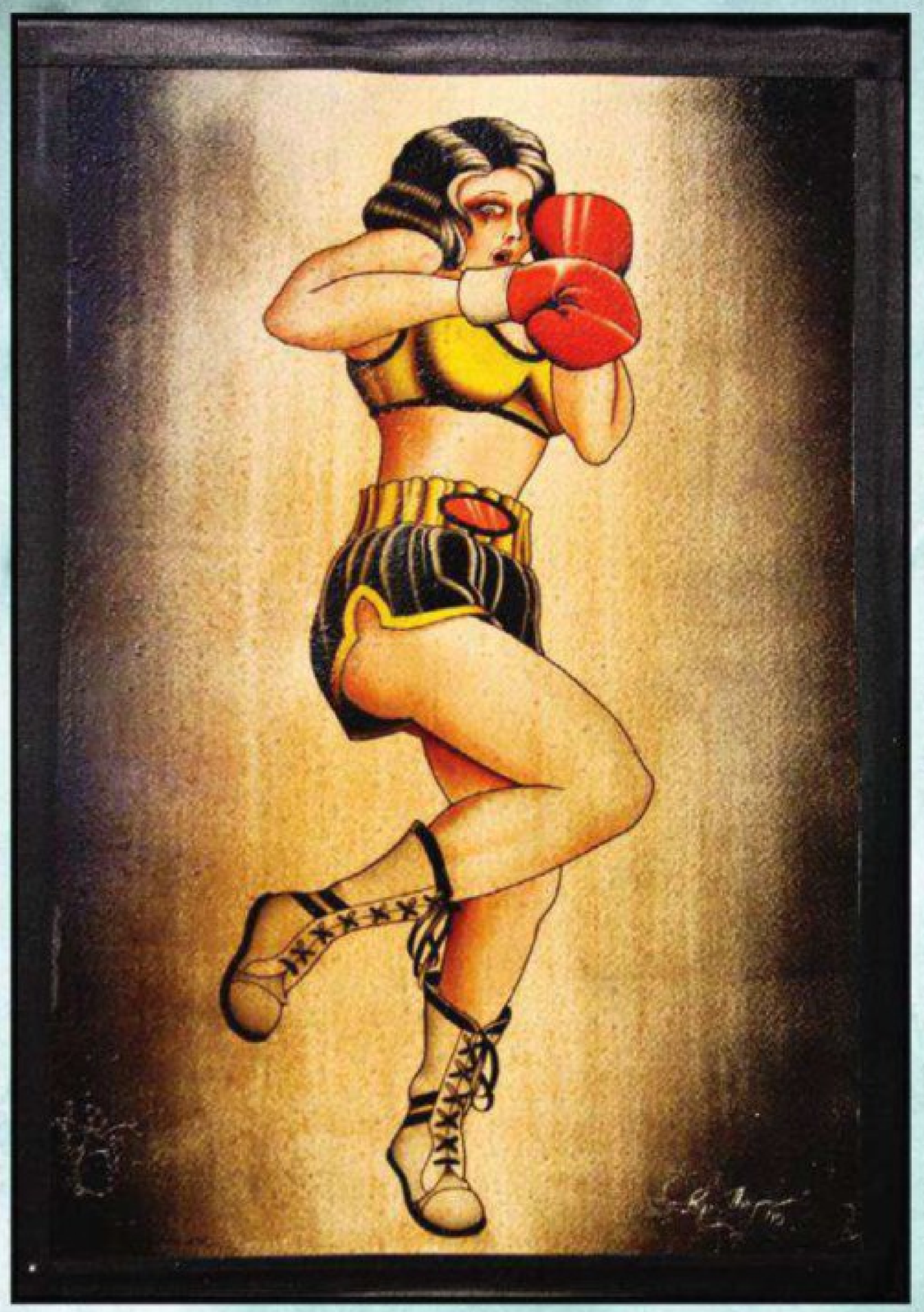






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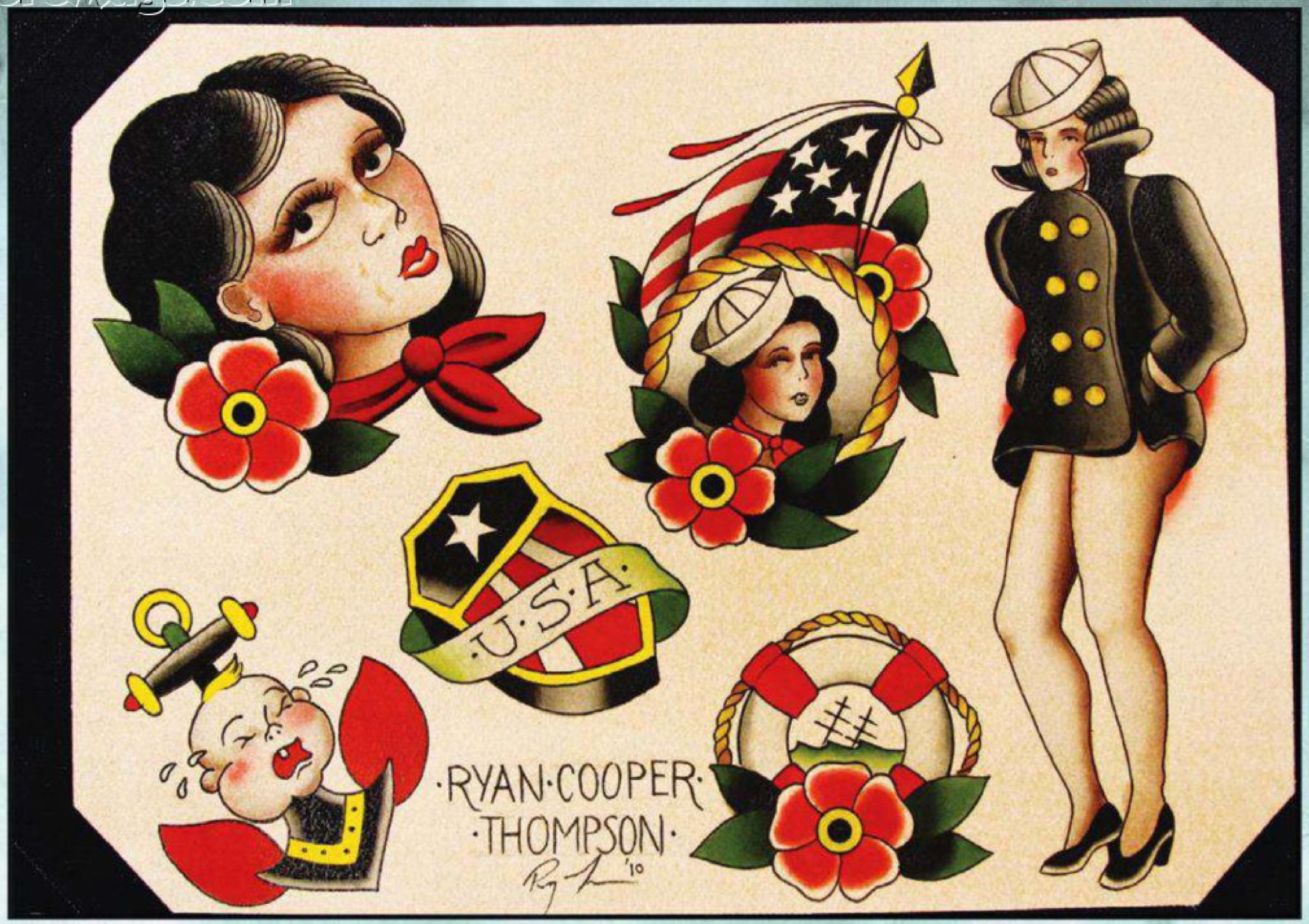




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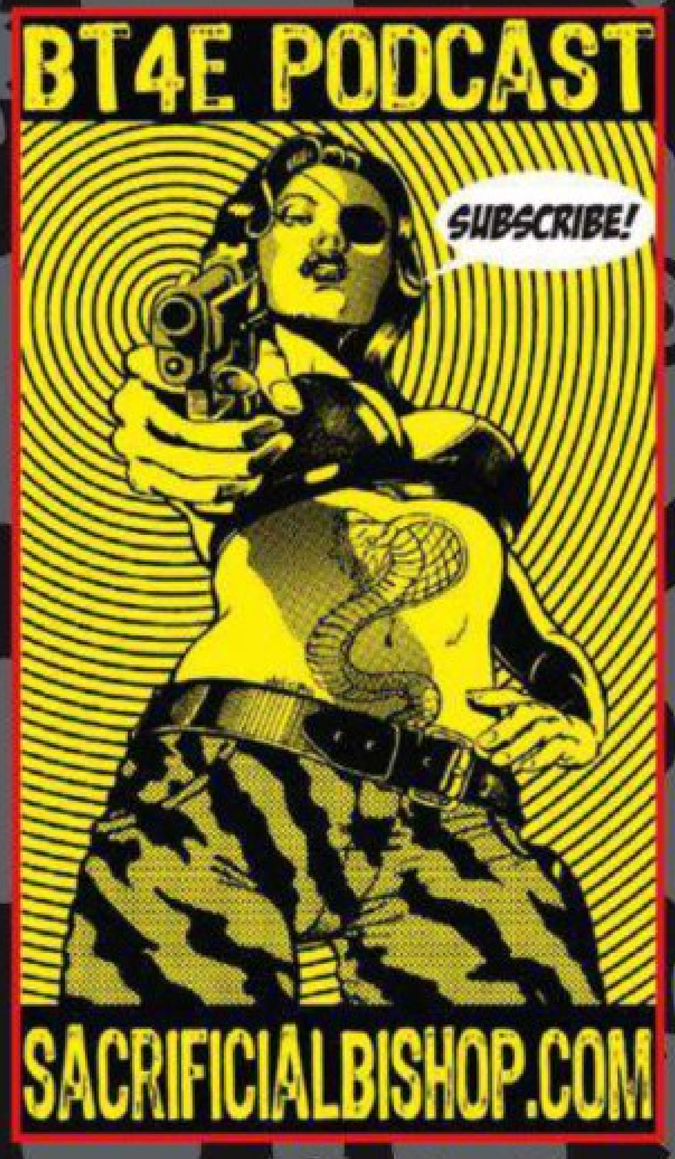
In your neck of the woods, you shouldn't be a stranger to anybody in the tattoo community. Your studio should be a household name, ringing off every lip.

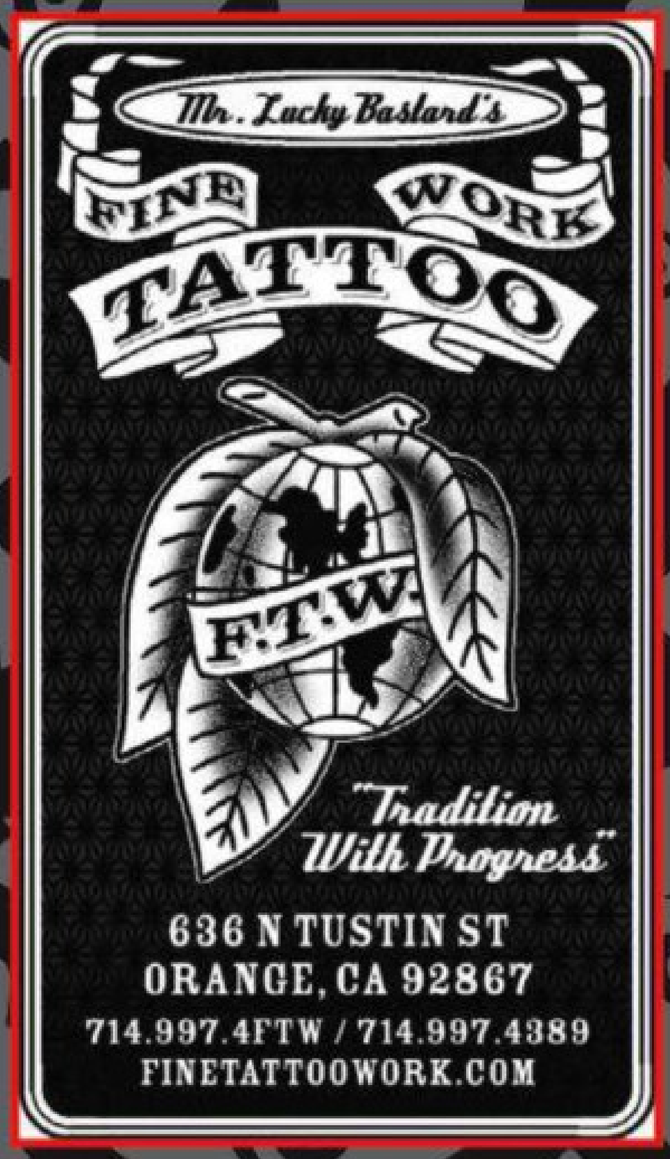
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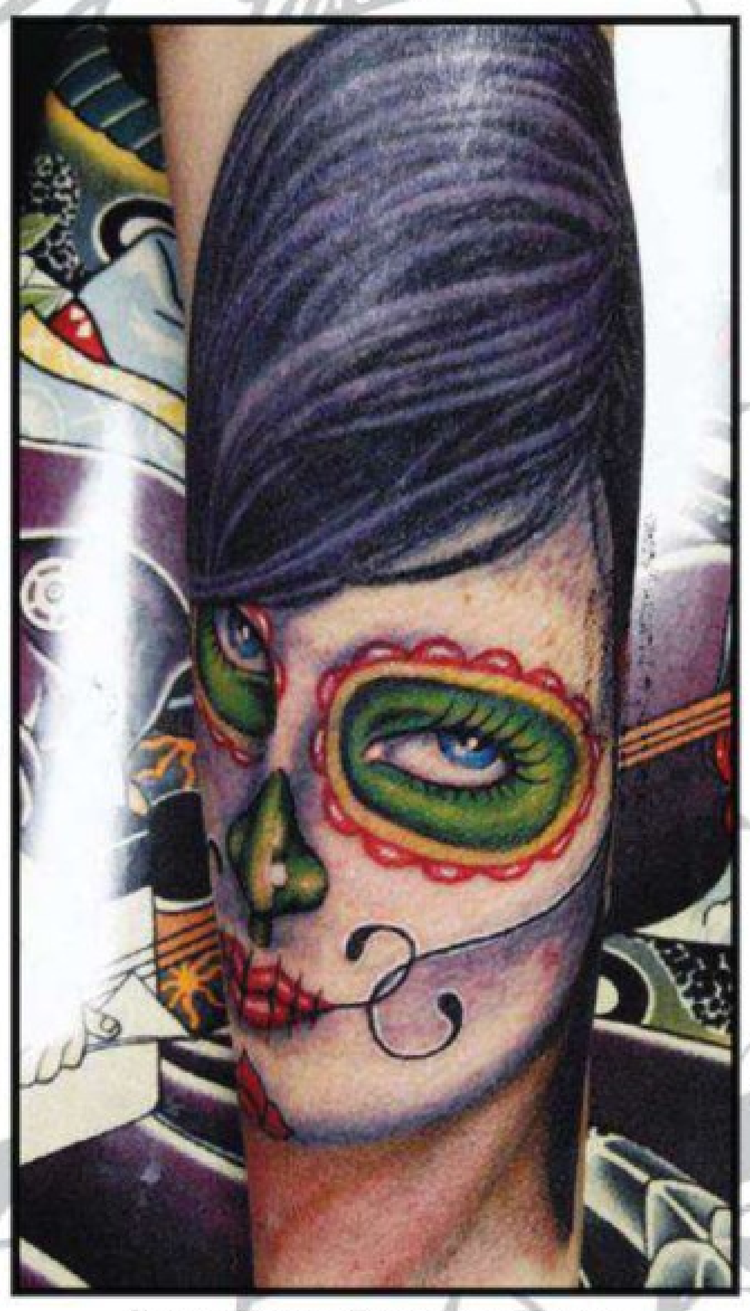


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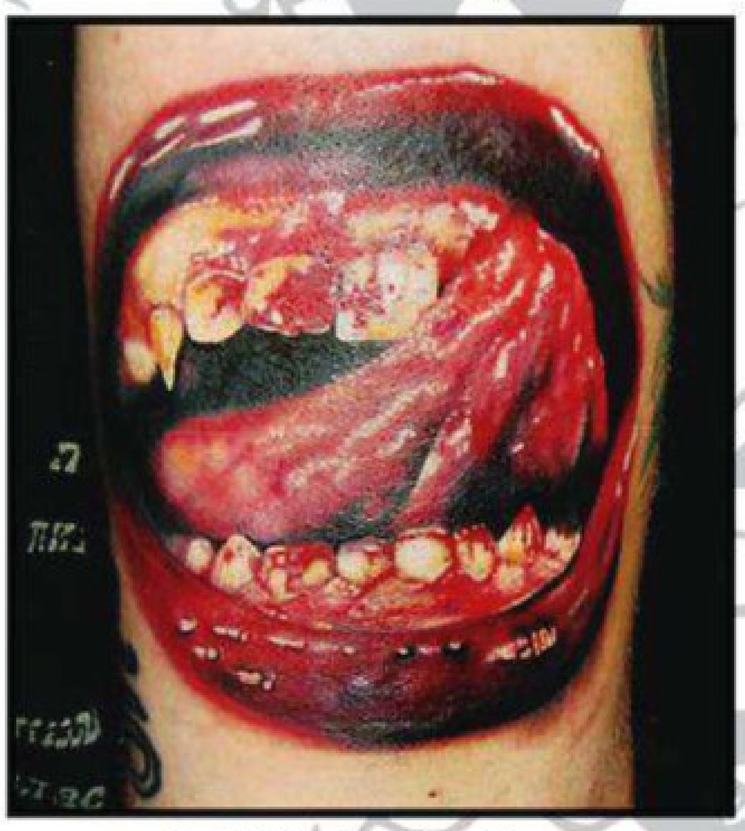
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tattoos from around the globe



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Newfield, NJ



Leif, Studio 8 Tattoos
Cocoa Beach, FL



Isaac Aguila, EC Tattoo
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Aaron Smith, New Addiction
Melbourne, FL



Suzi Q, Hold Fast Tattoo
Perth, Australia



Skrappy, Spider Monkey Tattoo
Olympia, WA

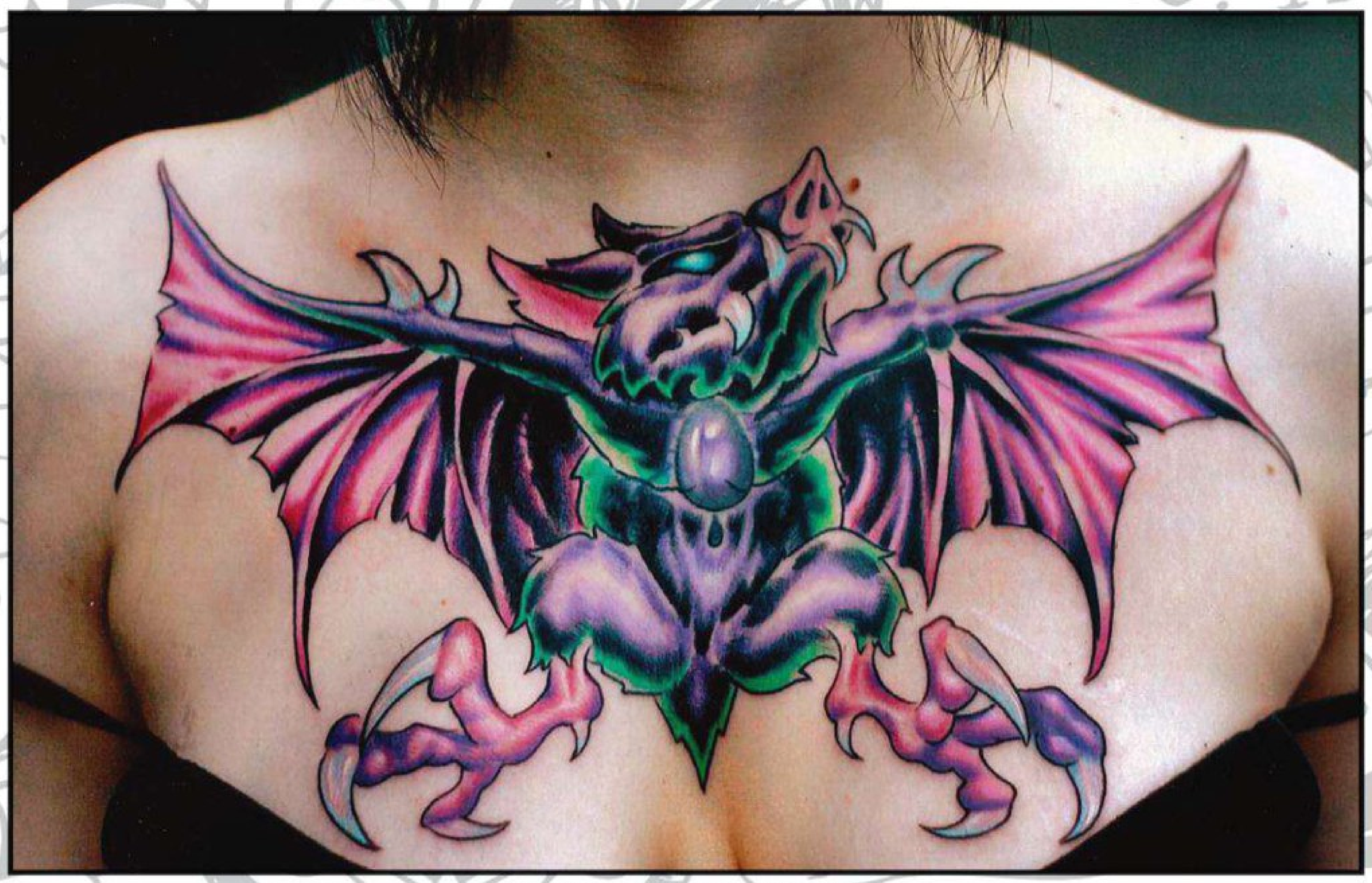
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Bryan Hall, Cherry Hill Tattoo
Naples, FL



Dave Allen, Preying Mantis Tattoos
Lakewood, CO



Isreal Caine, Spider Monkey Tattoo
Olympia, WA



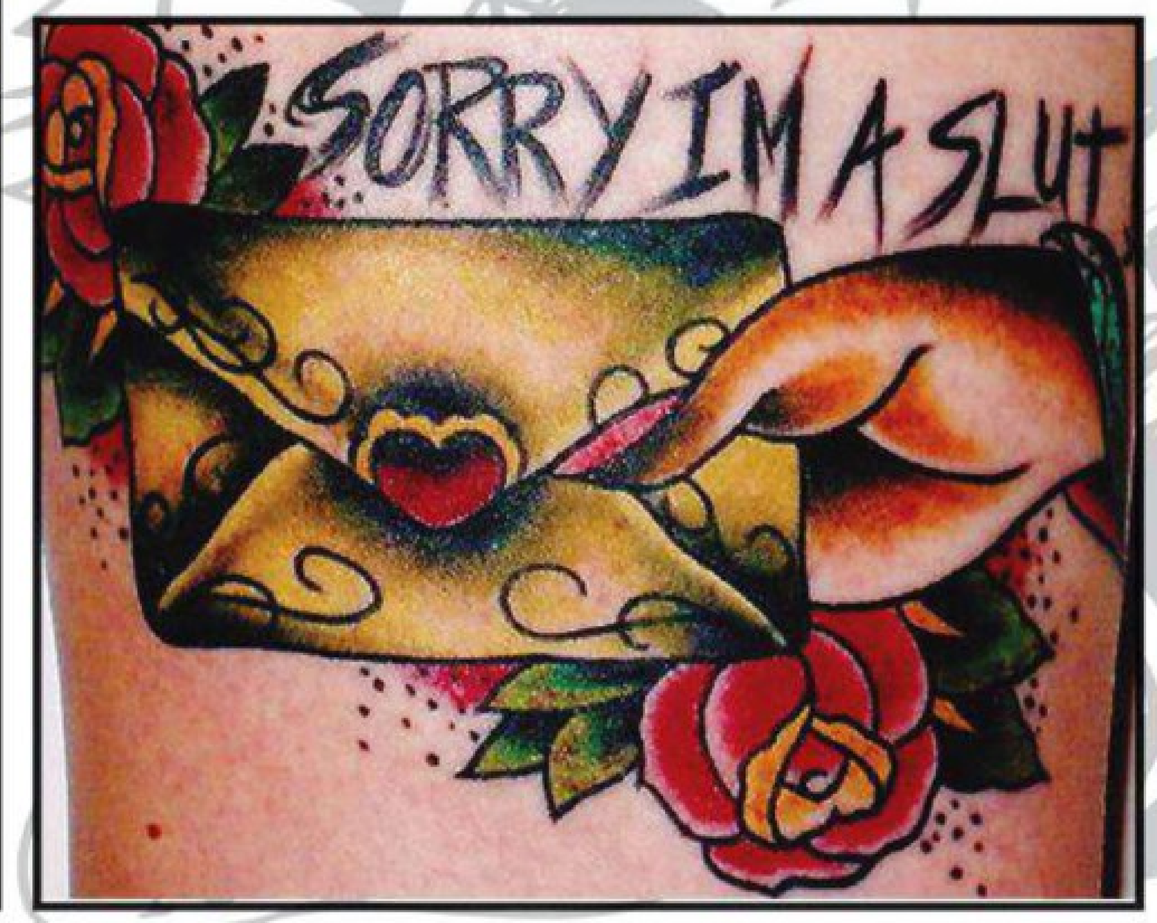
Glen Decker, Studio Ten Tattoos
Corner Brook, Canada



Skrappy, Spider Monkey Tattoo
Olympia, WA



Joseph Kindya, Brooklyn Ink Tattoo
Brooklyn, NY



High Noon Tattoo, Mikey Sarratt
Phoenix, AZ

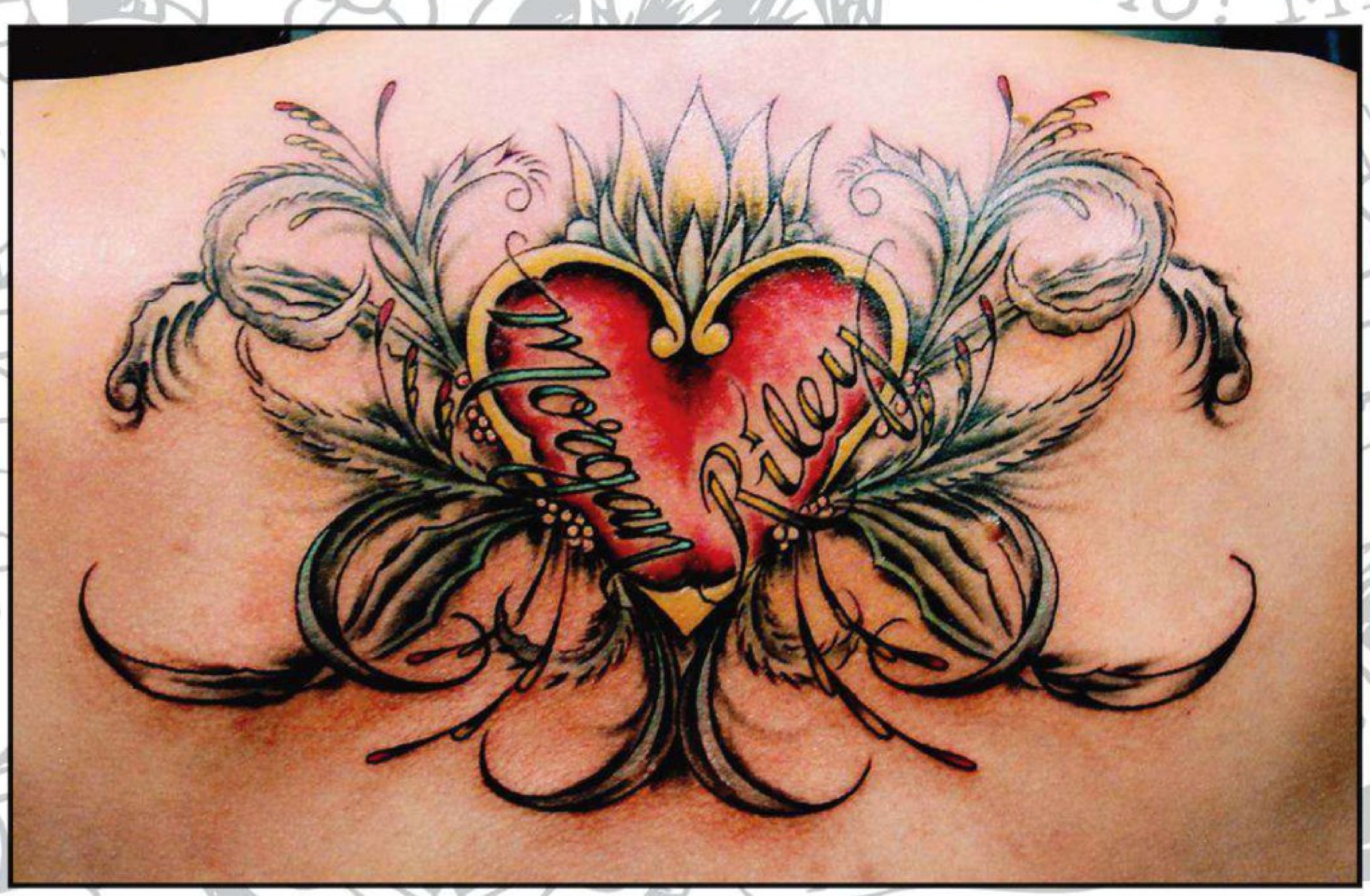
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Michael Patrick, Jester's Court Tattoo
Pittsburgh, PA



Robert, Ink Kitchen
Hengelo, Holland



Traci Hancock, Boomtown Tattoo
Martinsburg, WV

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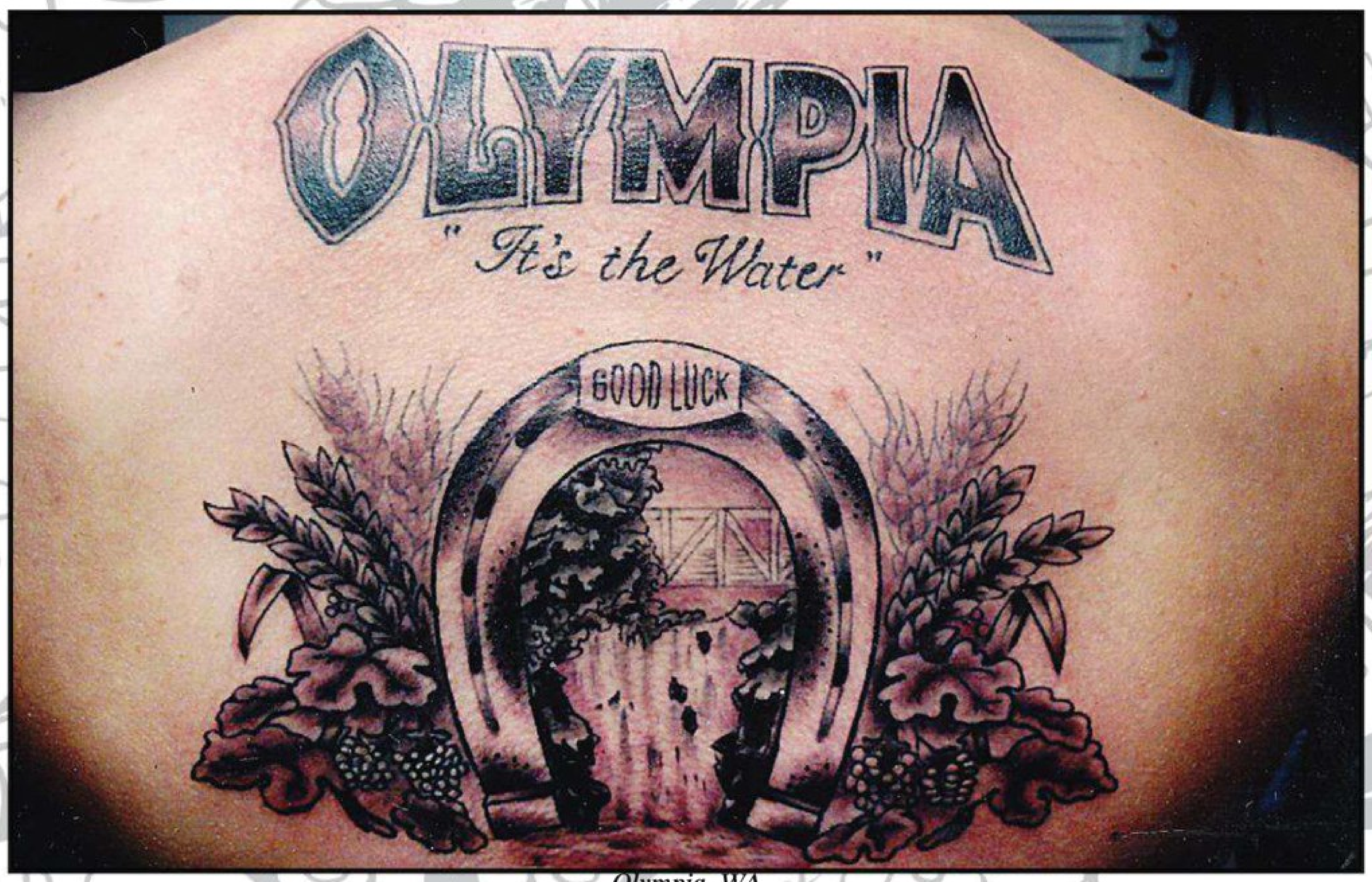
Mikey Sarratt, High Noon Tattoo,
Phoenix, AZ



Altamonte Springs, FL



Elgin, IL



Olympia, WA

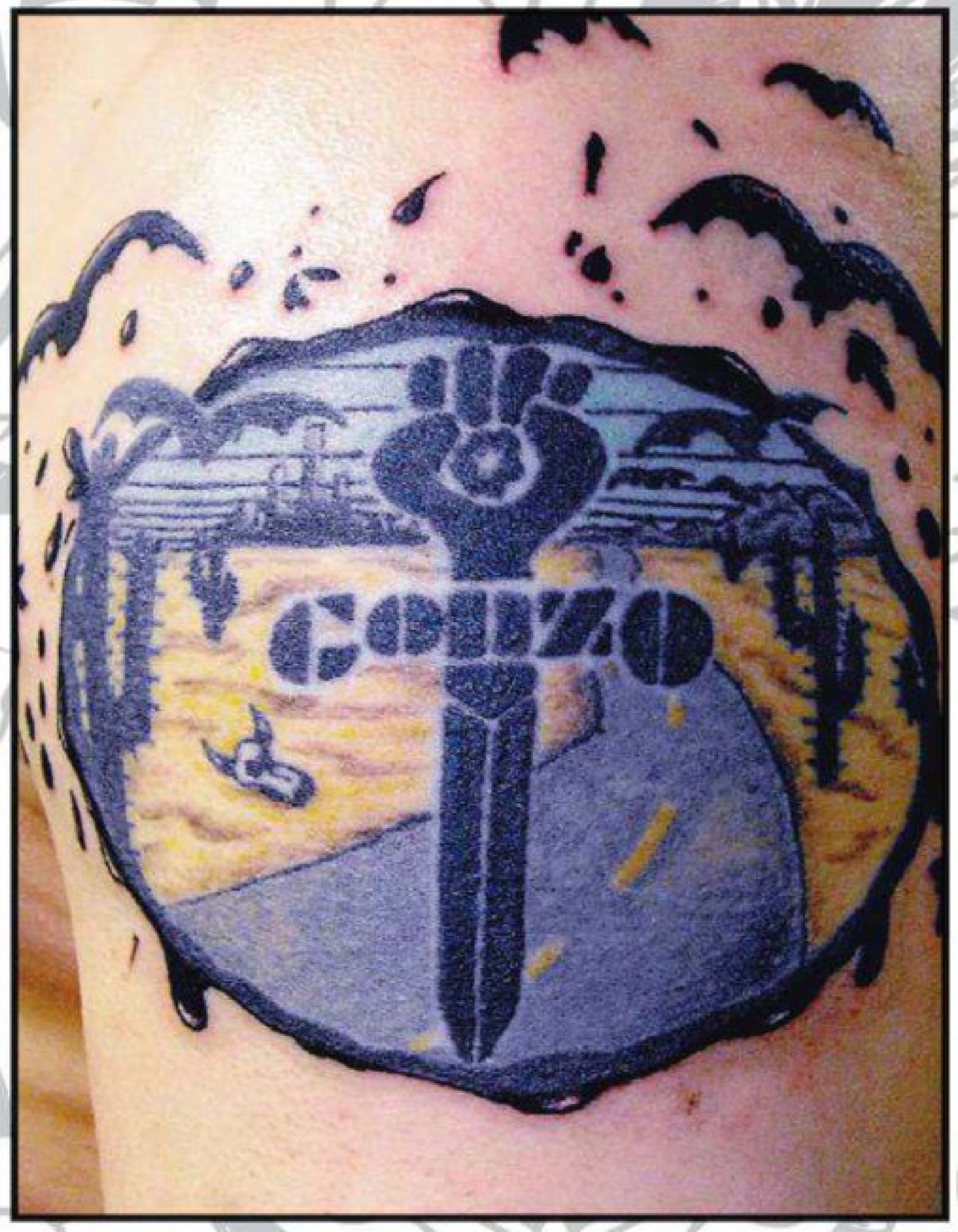
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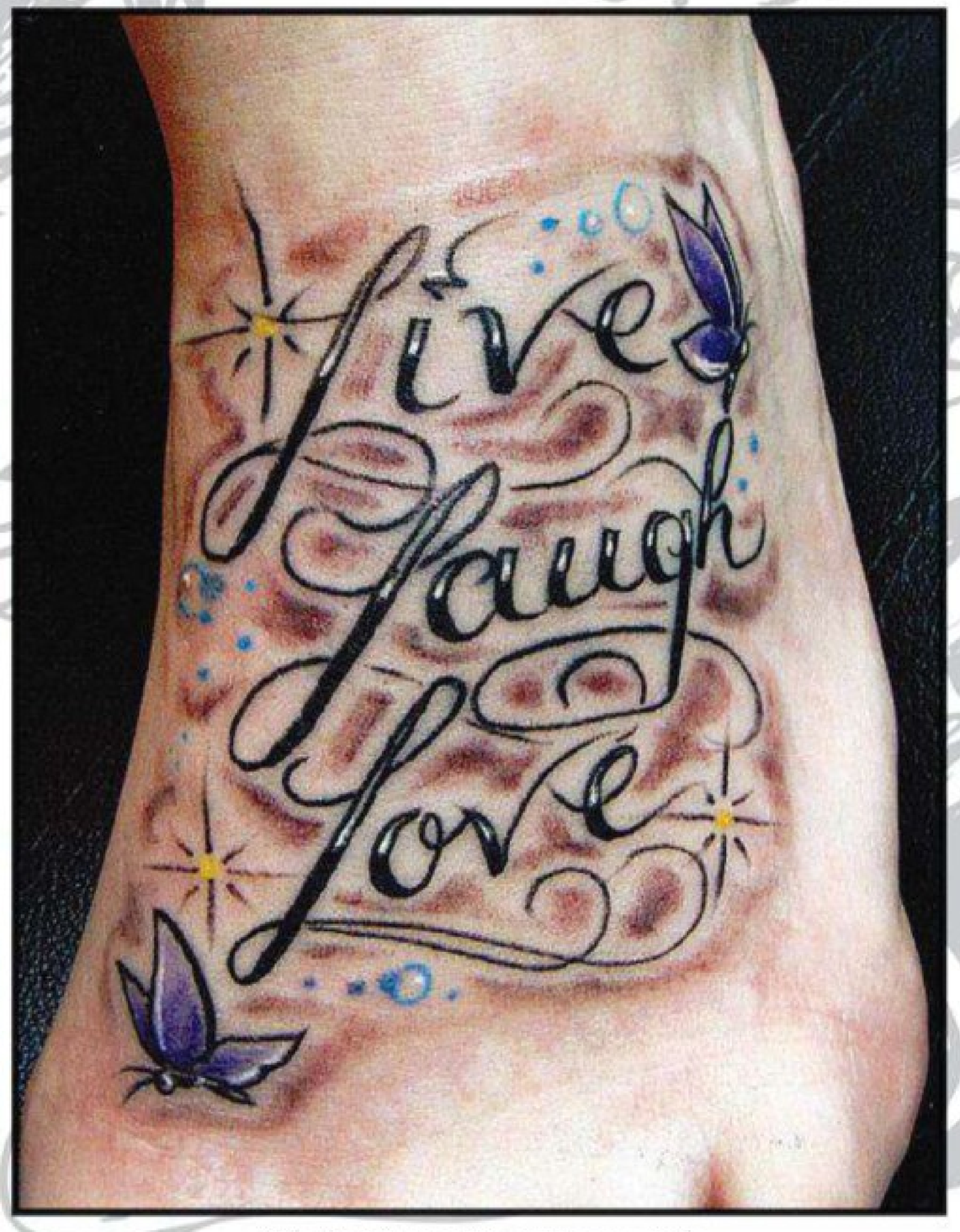
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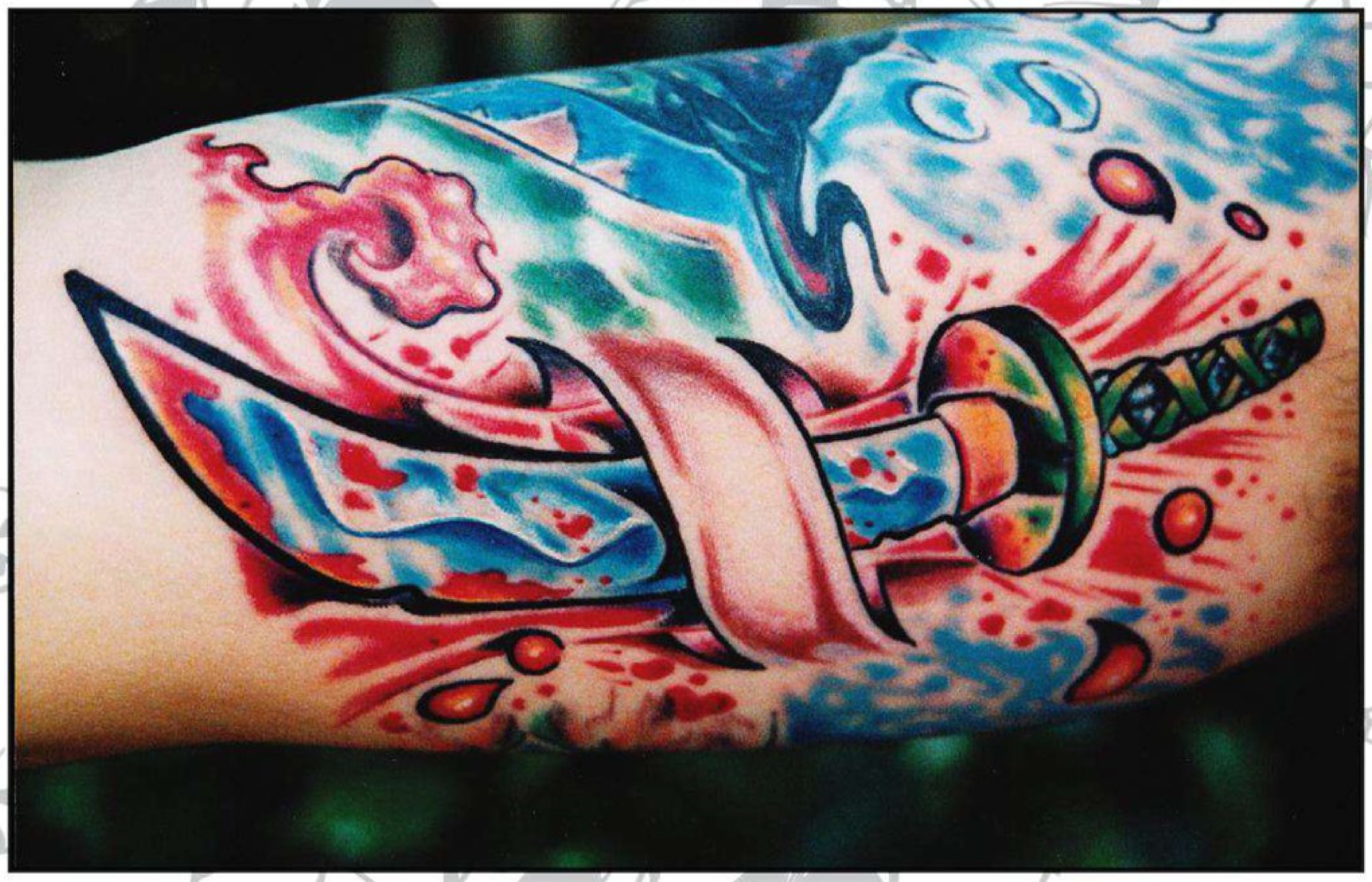
Fabrizio Divari
Toronto, Canada



Lynn Buckner, Freedom Tattoo, Inc.
Chattanooga, TN



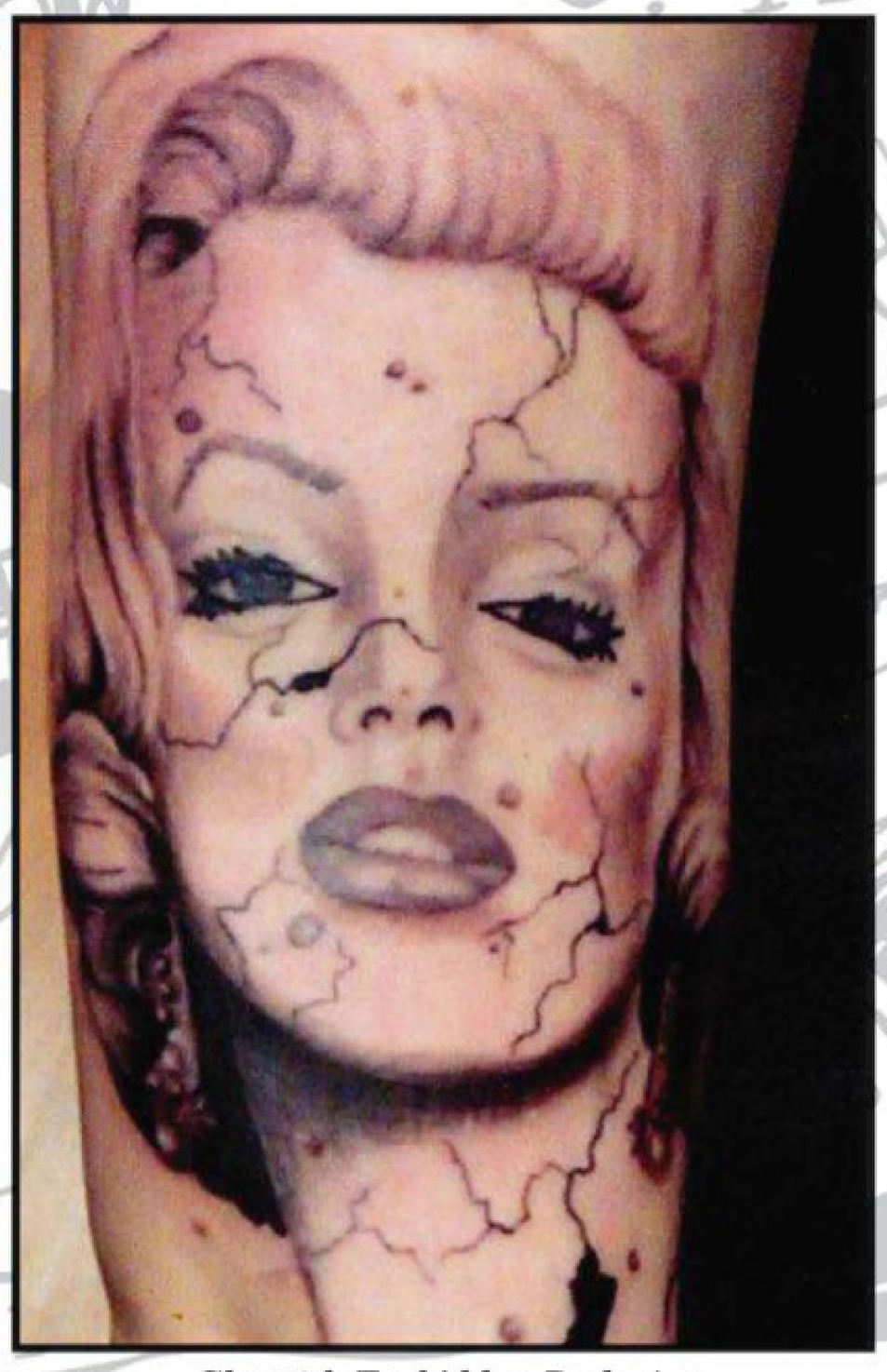
Chris Myra, Dog House Ink
Ontario, Canada



Caine, Inu Tattoo
San Diego, CA



Cliff Collard, Arsenal Tattoo and Design
College Station, TX



Chantel, Forbidden Body Art
Portland, OR

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Rev. Todd, Homeward Bound Tattoo
Redwood City, CA



Michael L. Pfau, Smiling Buddha Tattoo
Savannah, GA



Chris Myra, Dog House Ink
Ontario, Canada



Anna Waychoff, Saint Tattoo
Knoxville, TN

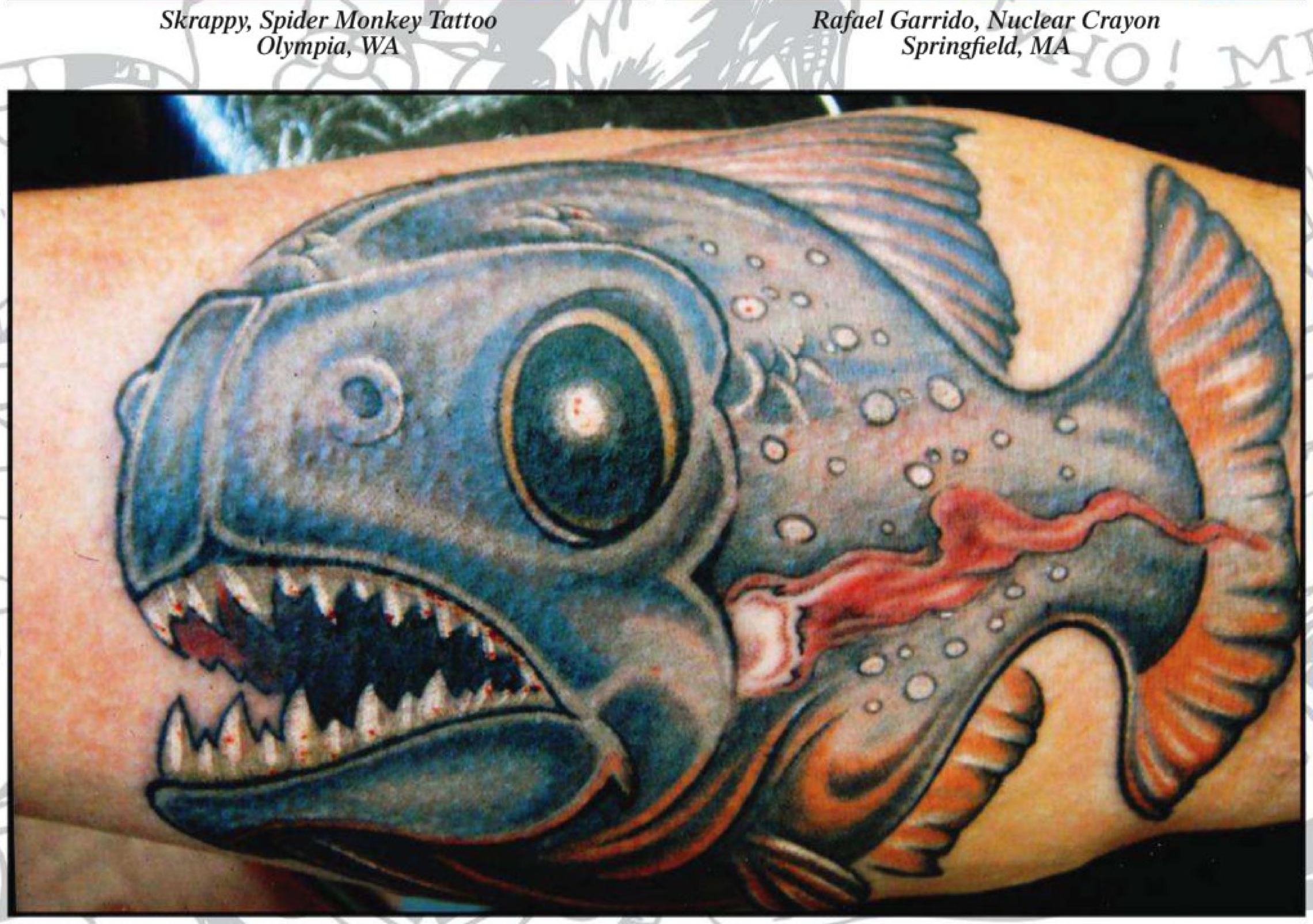
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Skrappy, Spider Monkey Tattoo
Olympia, WA

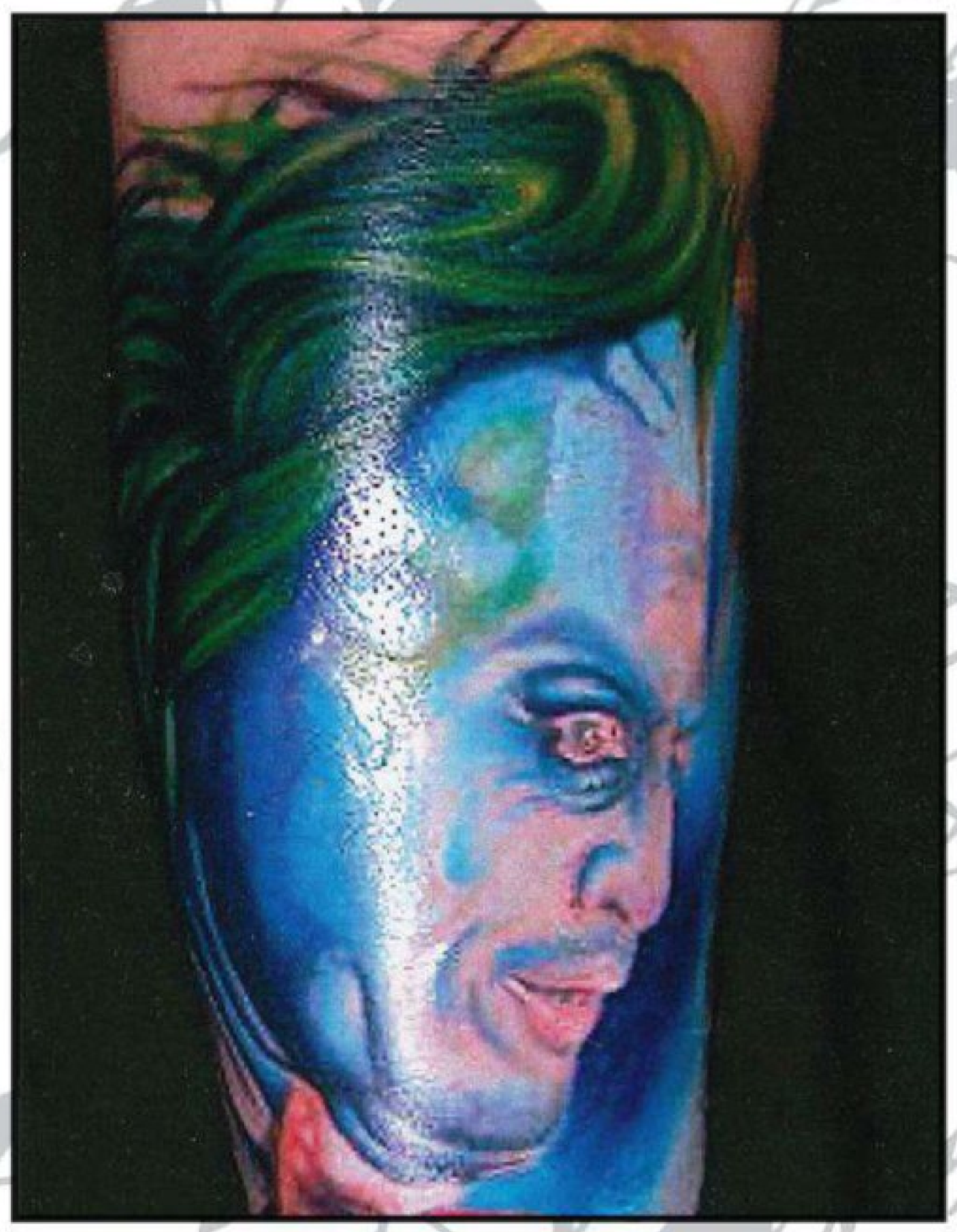


Rafael Garrido, Nuclear Crayon
Springfield, MA



Mike Hughes, Electric Monk Tattoo
Santa Rosa, CA

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Danny Boy Medina, La Bella Vida Tattoos
St. Ventura, CA



Laura Jade, Forbidden Body Art
Portland, OR



Joshua Ross, Mind's Eye Tattoo
Emmaus, PA



Fabian Madeleine, Malefic Tattoos
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

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Jonathan Gilbert, Solid Tattoo
Twentynine Palms, CA



Sebastiaan, King of Kings Tattoo
Swalmen, Holland



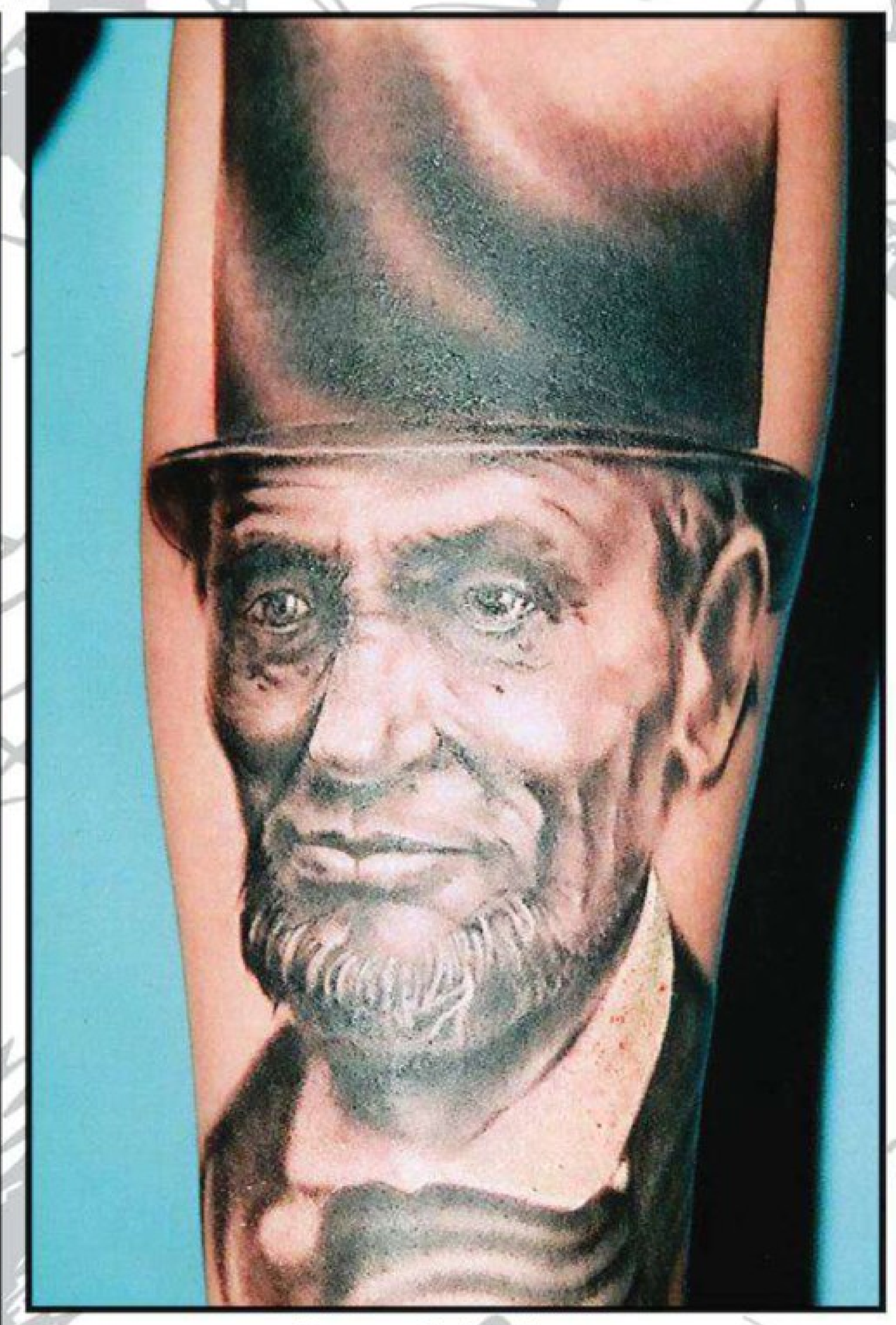
Azarja van der Veen, Shotsie's Tattoo
Wayne, NJ

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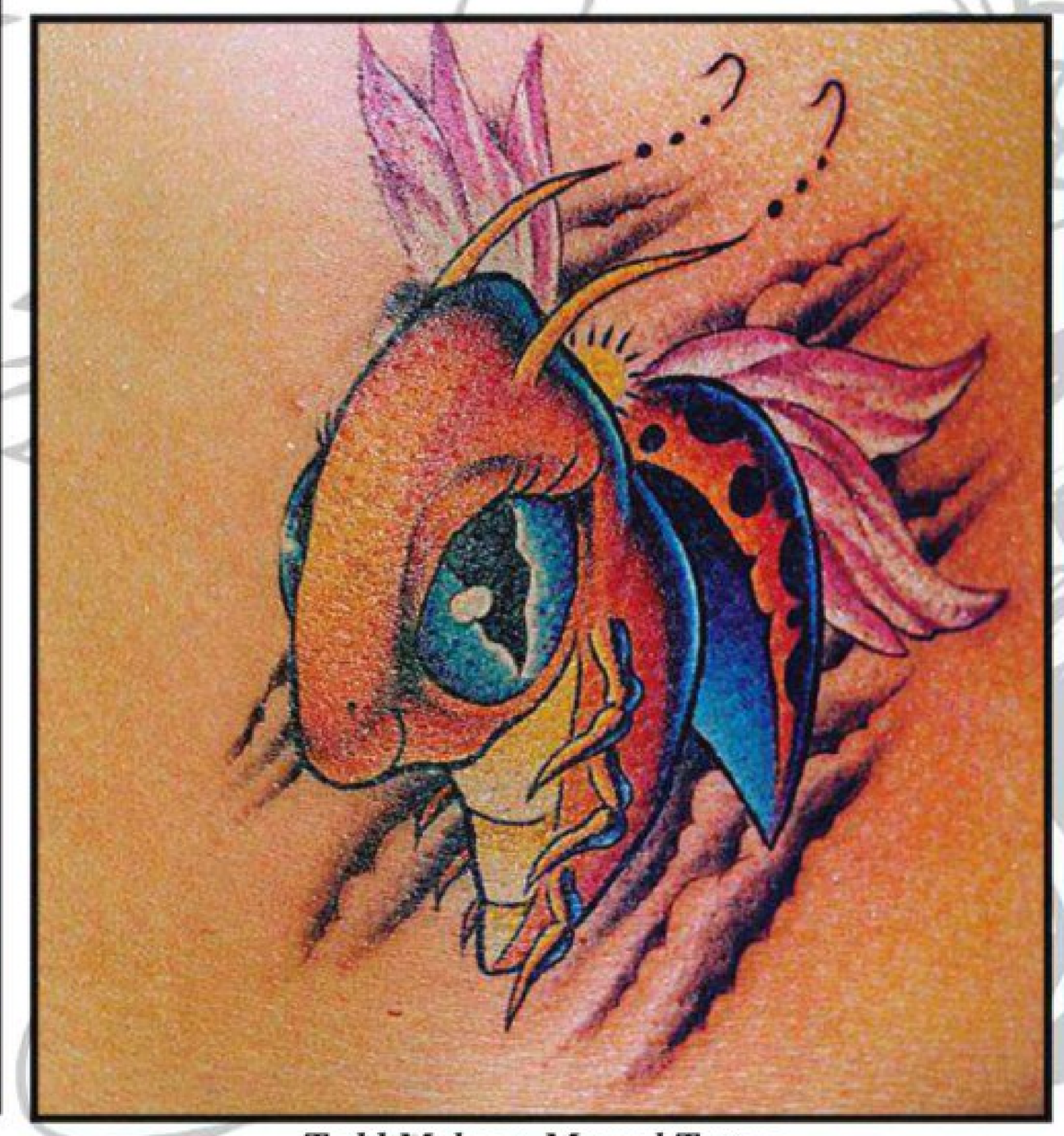
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Jame Barnhill, Tattoo Trillionaires
Columbia, SC

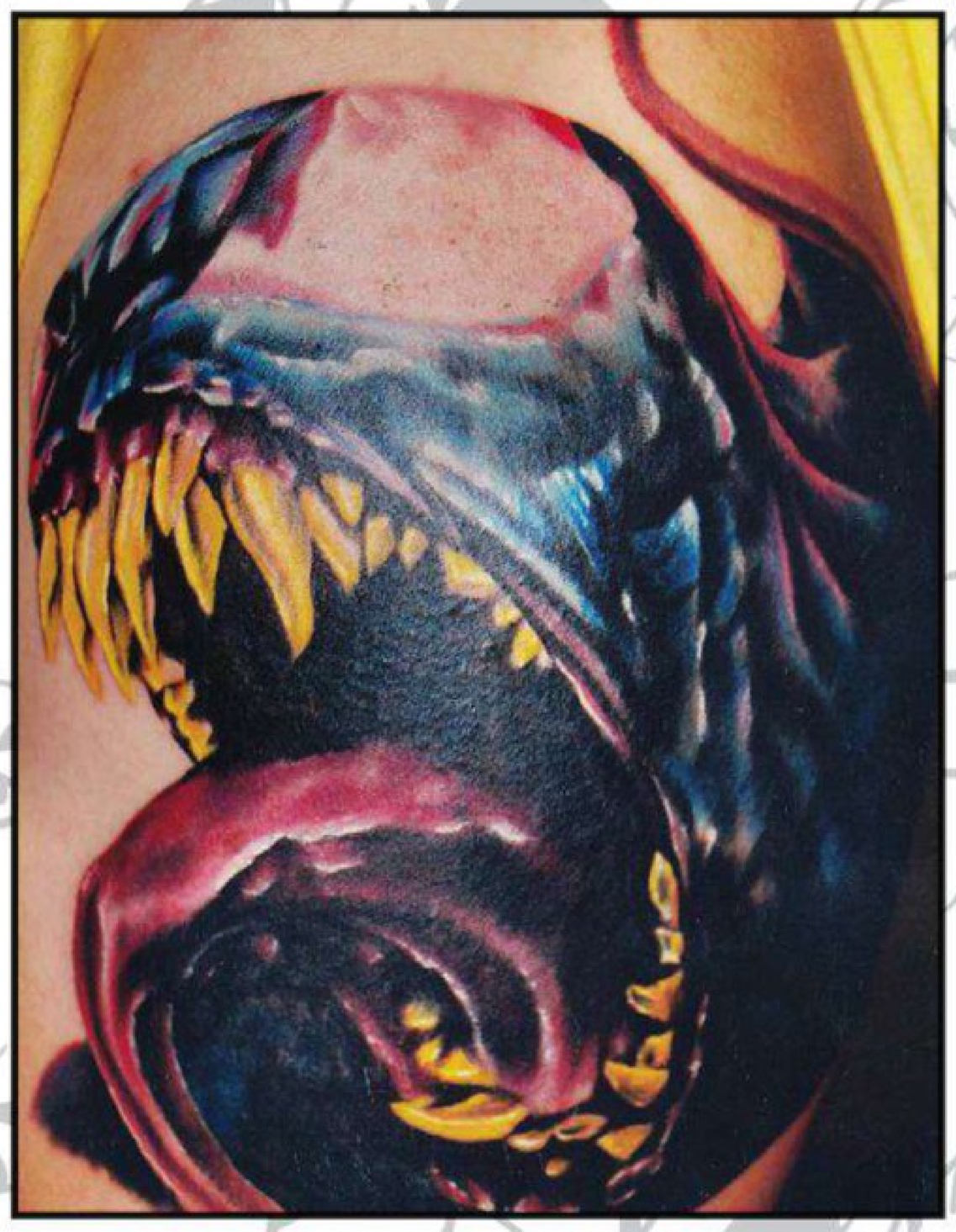


Rooster, Prick Tattoos
San Antonio, TX



Todd Melson, Marvel Tattoo
South Bend, IN

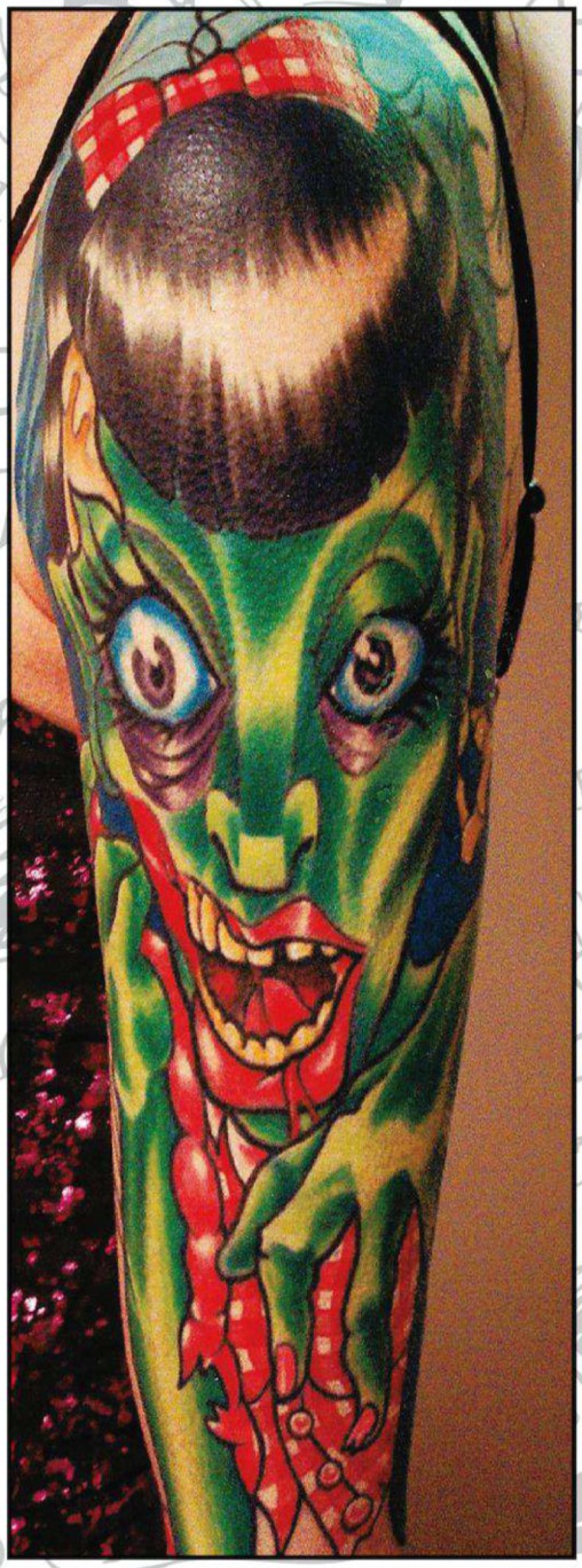
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Billy Sarno, The Temple Decor
Kalispell, MT



Theresa Barnhill, Tattoo Trillionaires
Columbia, SC



Jim White, Chrome Gardens
Gettysburg, PA

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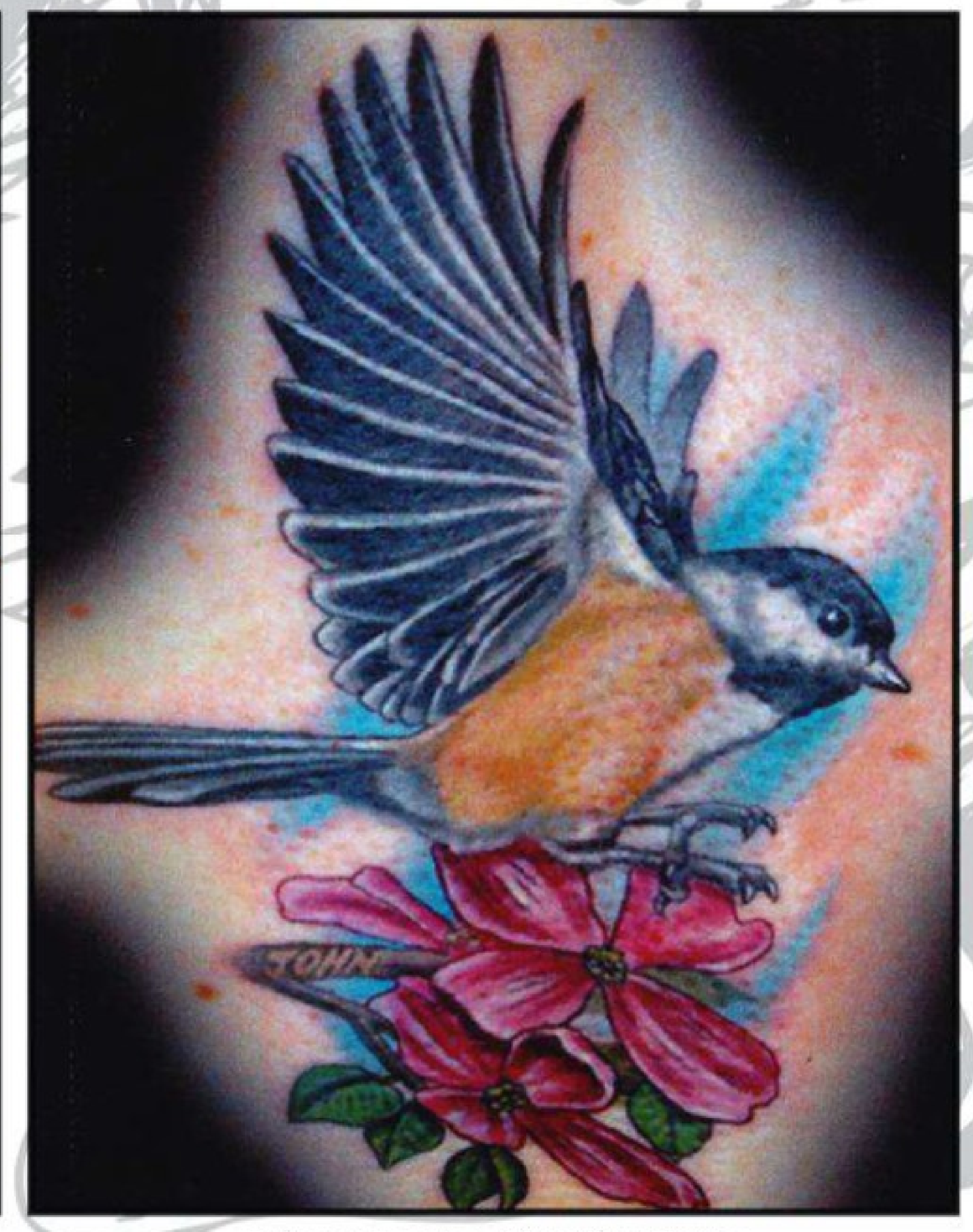
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Michael L. Pfau, Smiling Buddha Tattoo
Savannah, GA



Johnny Rotten, Juli Moon Studios
Lynn, MA



Johnny Berrios, Nautilus Tattoo
Newington, CT

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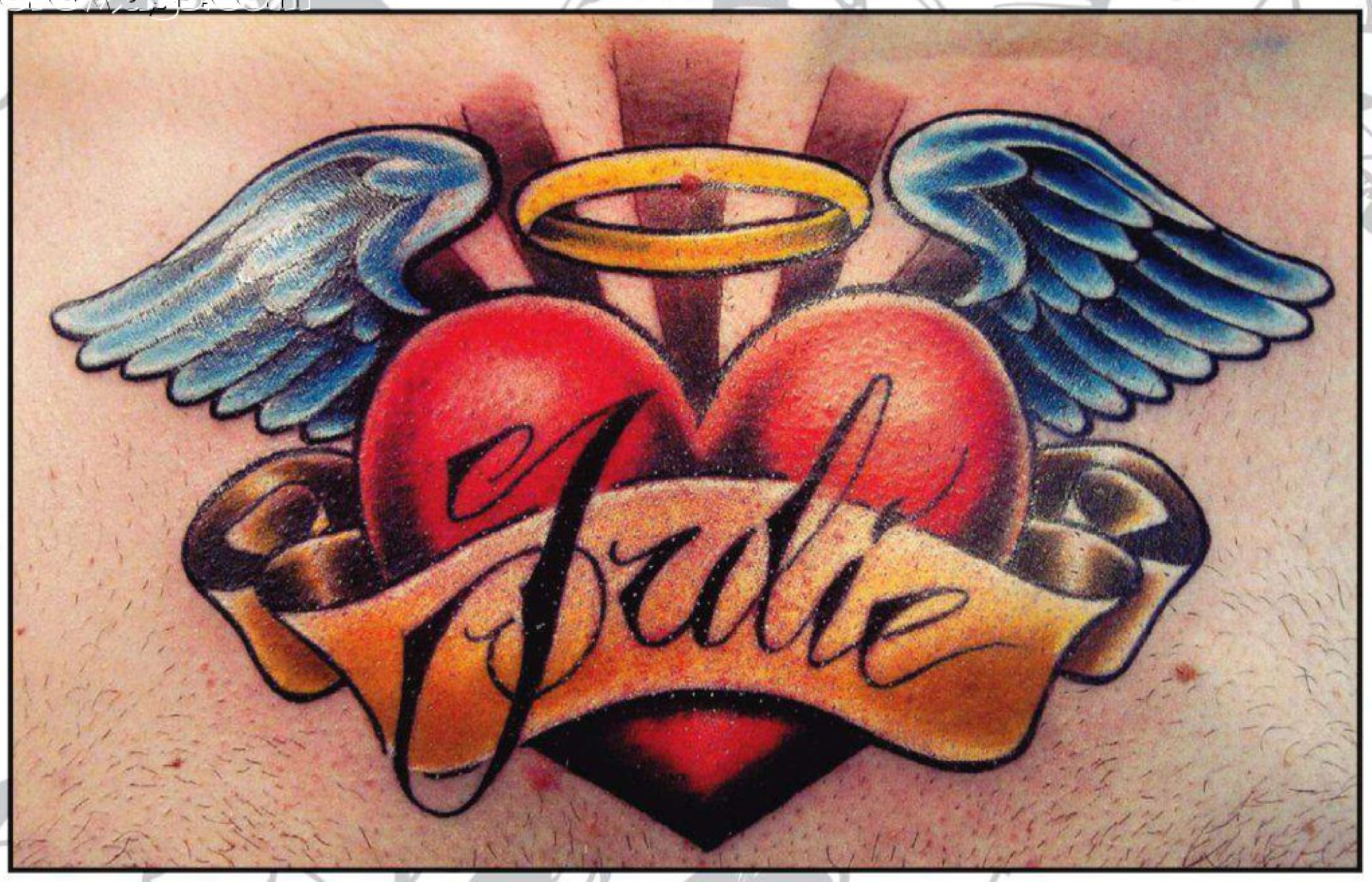


Corey Summers, Saint Tattoo
Knoxville, TN

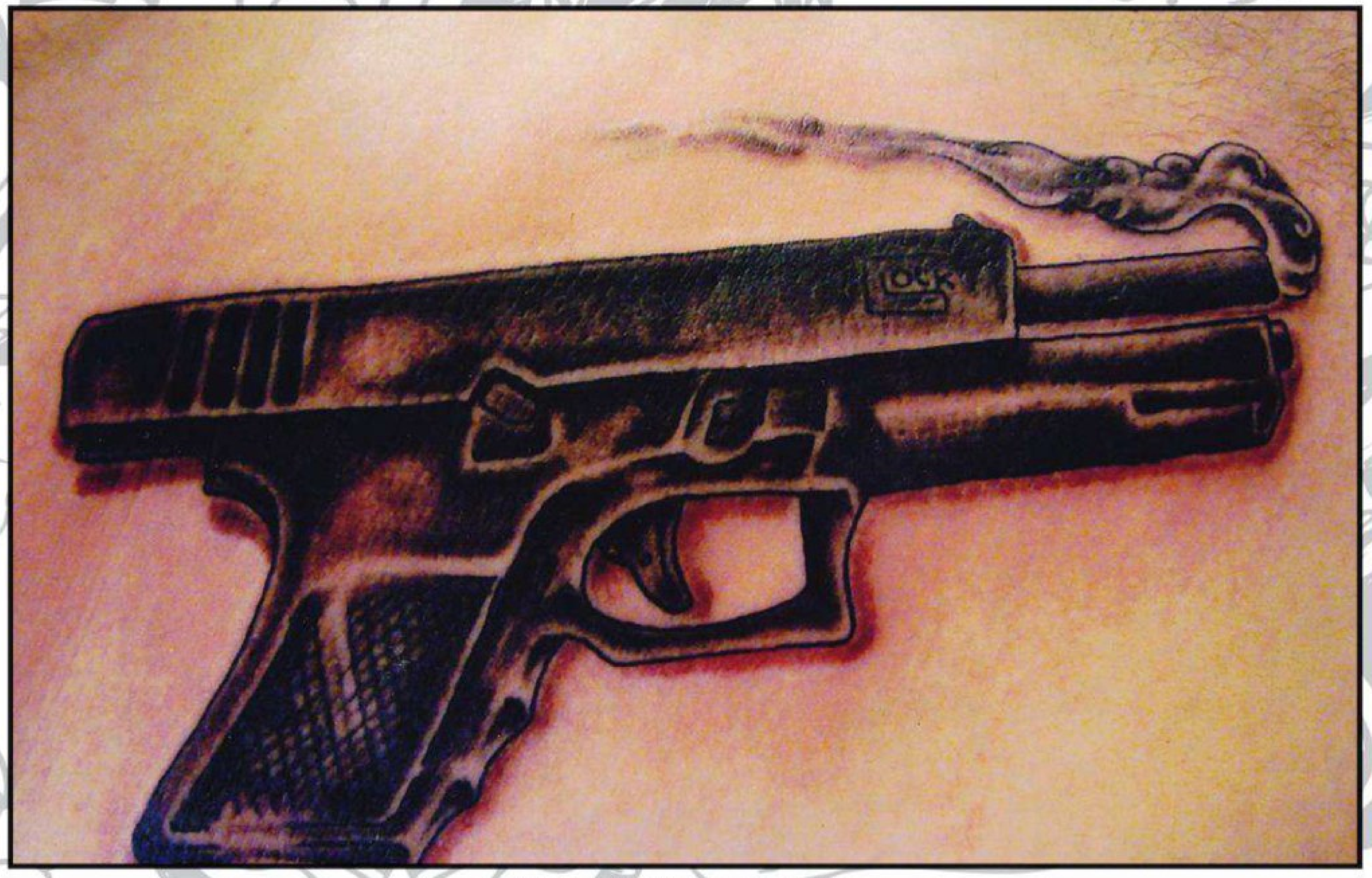


Andy Bagshaw, Living Art Tattoo
Sioux City, IA

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Jim White, Chrome Gardens
Gettysburg, PA



Cuz'n Bill, Sacramento Tattoo
Sacramento, CA



Andy Bagshaw, Living Art Tattoo
Sioux City, IA



George Labrada, Evil or Sacred Tattoos
Los Angeles, CA

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Erick, Pussycat Tattoo
Milwaukie, OR

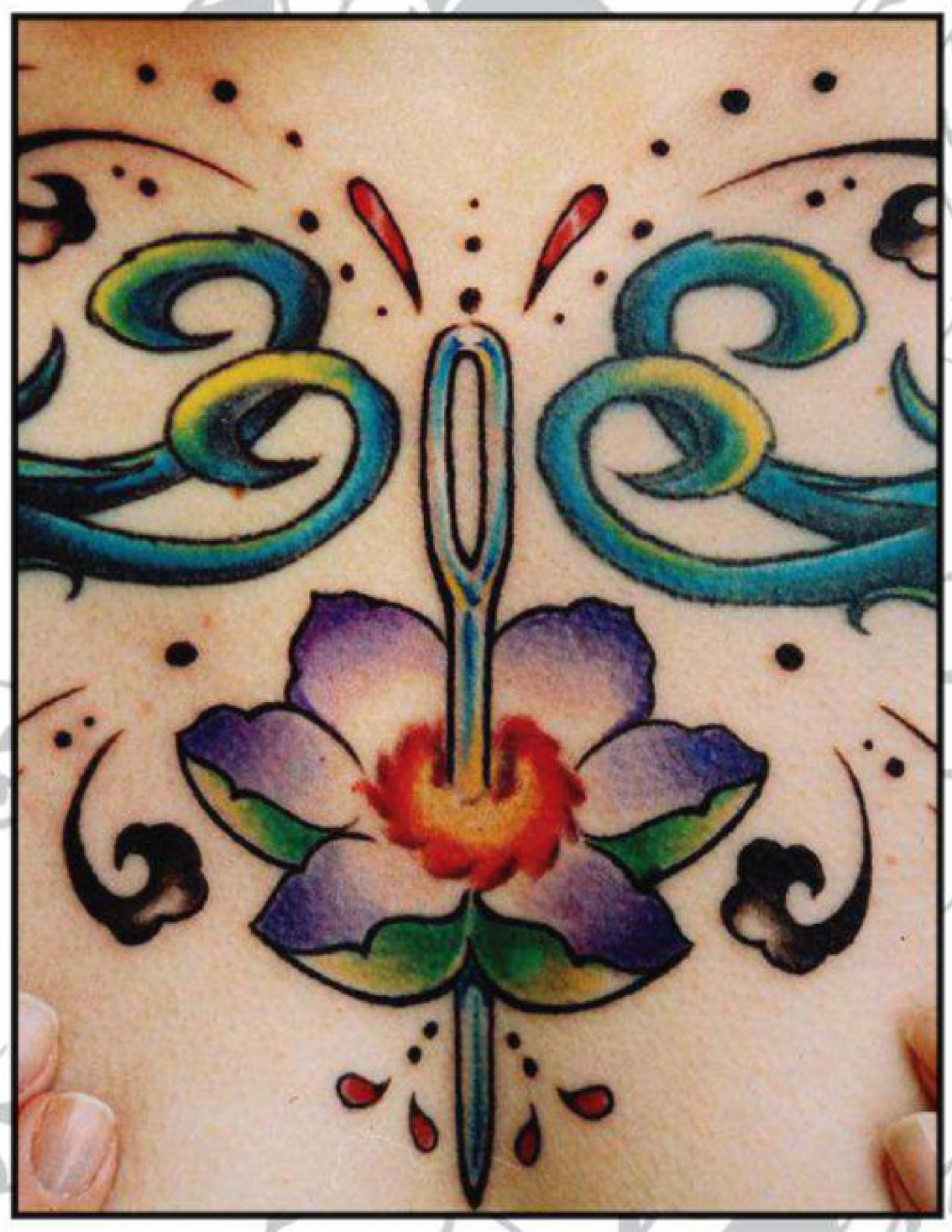


Jesse Strother
Akron, OH

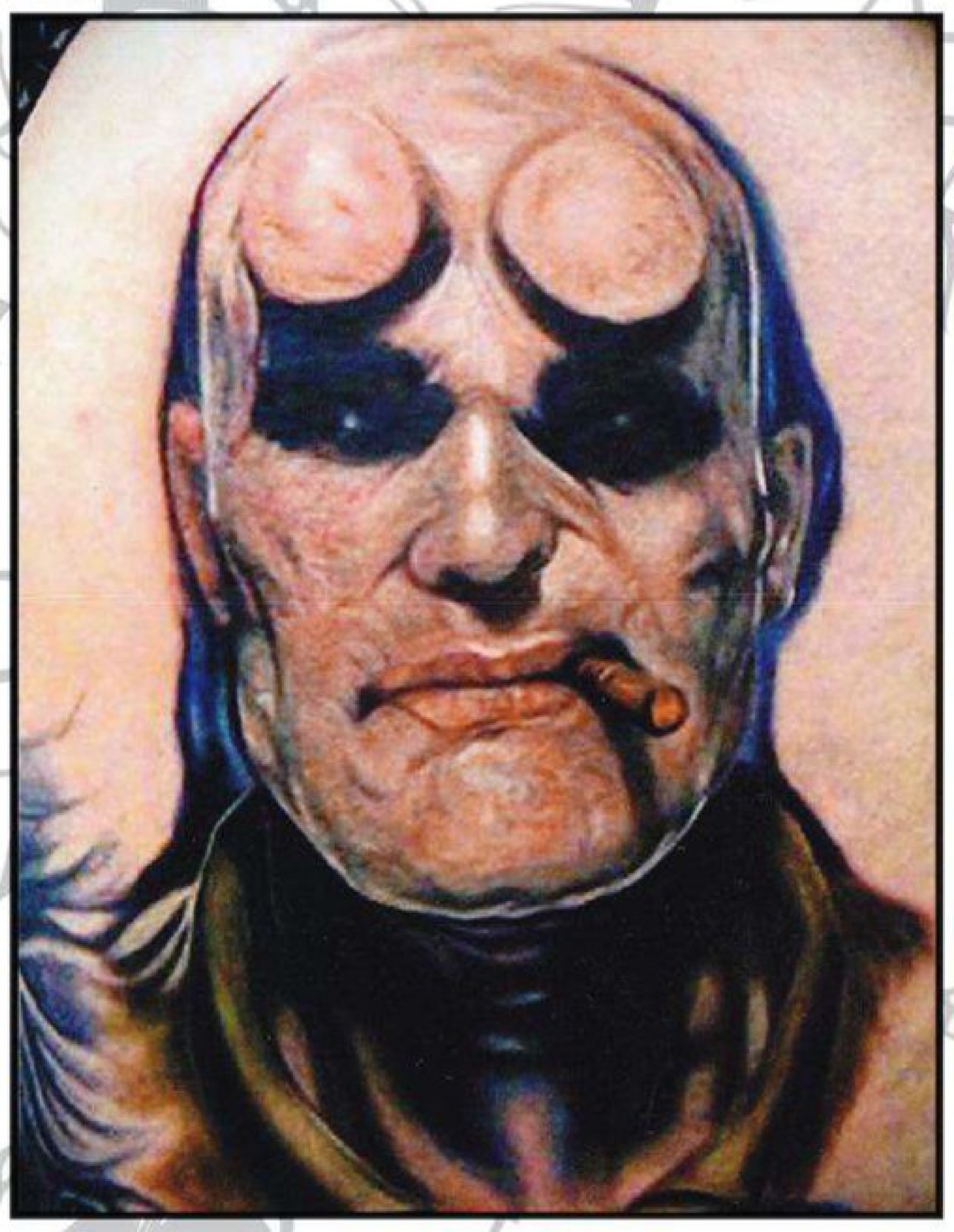


Scott Dowdy, Tattoo Consortium
Bryan, TX

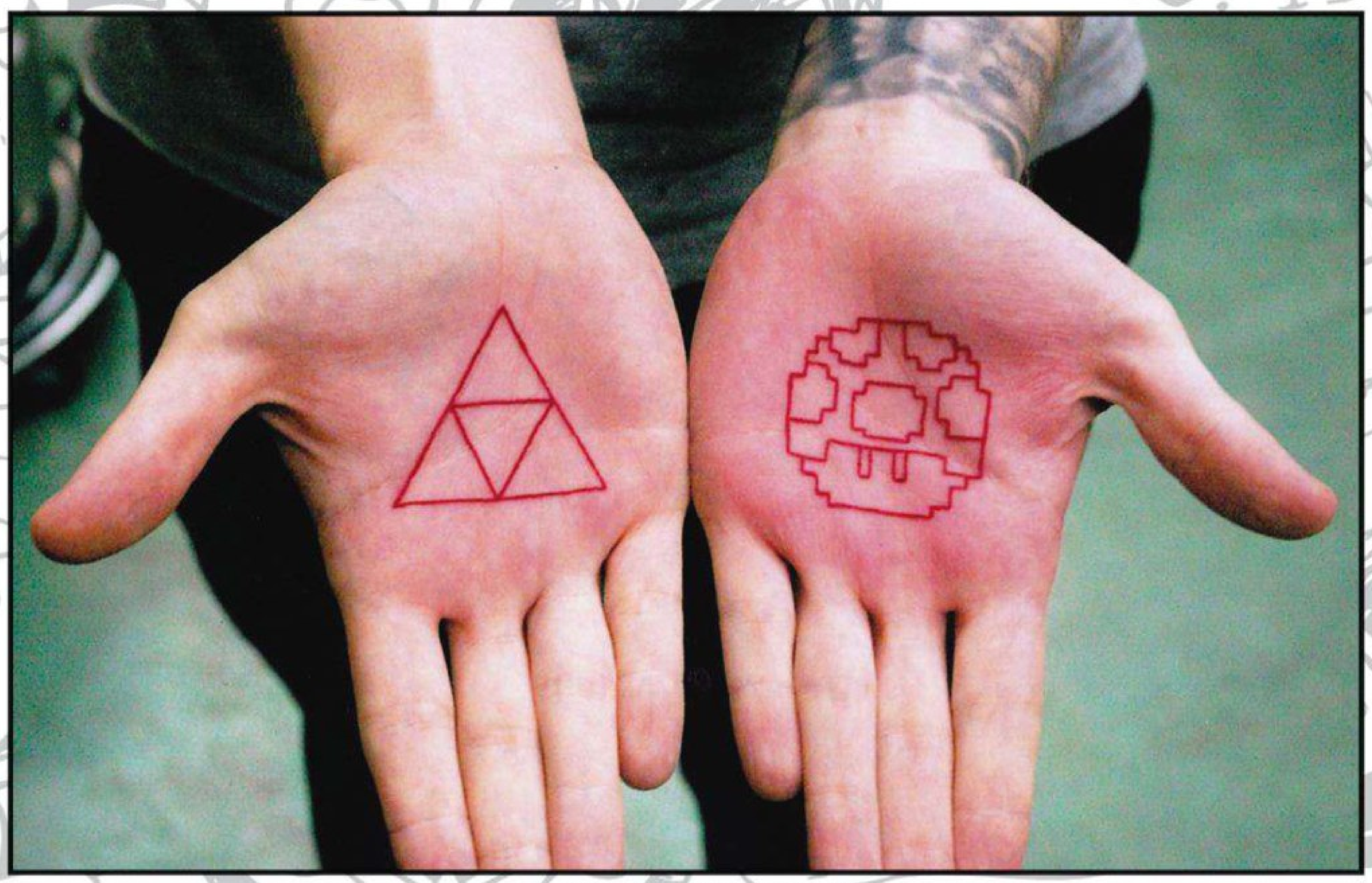
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Caine, Inu Tattoo
San Diego, CA



Leif, Studio 8 Tattoos
Cocoa Beach, FL



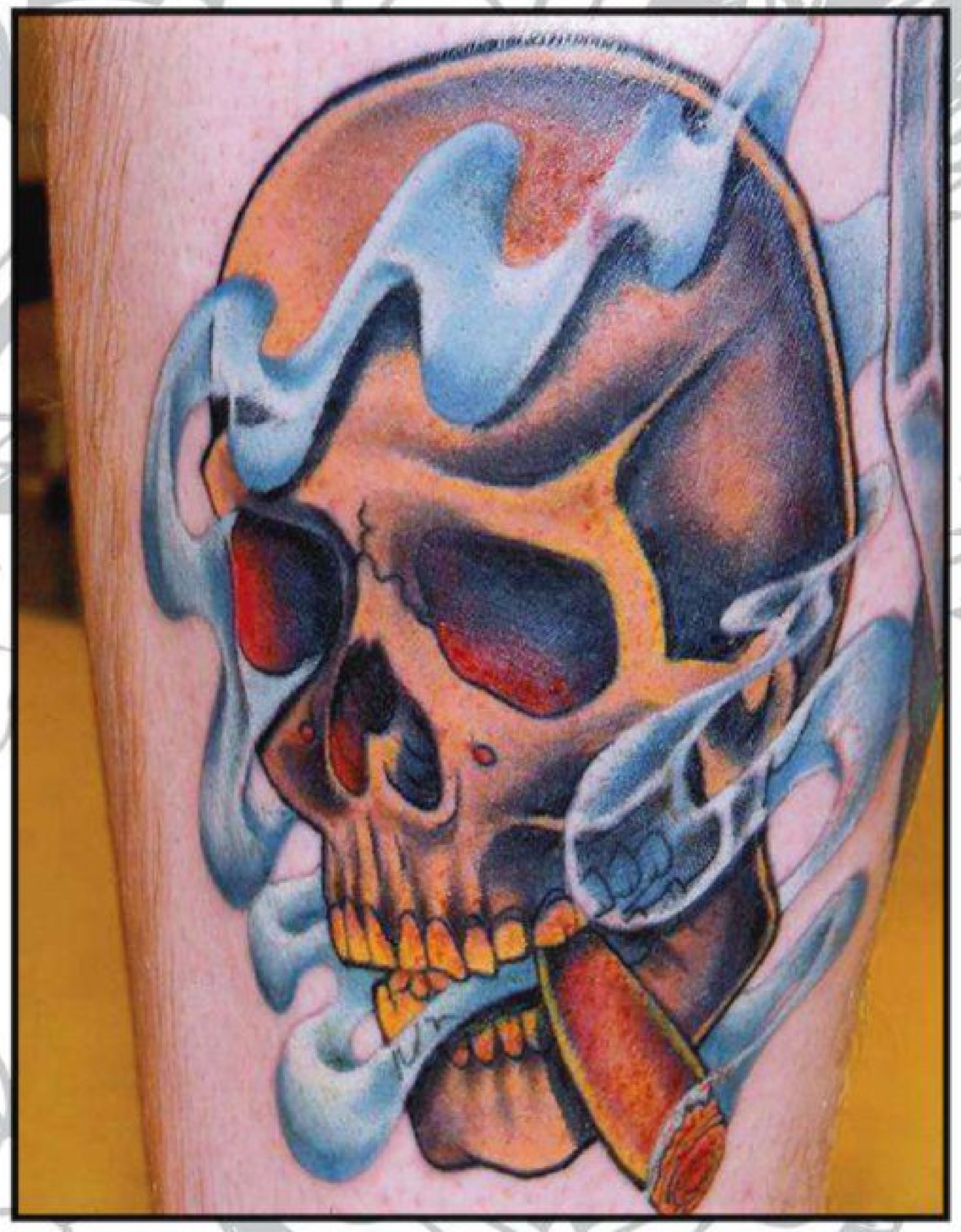
Matthew Gibeau, Spider Monkey Tattoo
Olympia, WA



Aaron Smith, New Addiction
Melbourne, FL



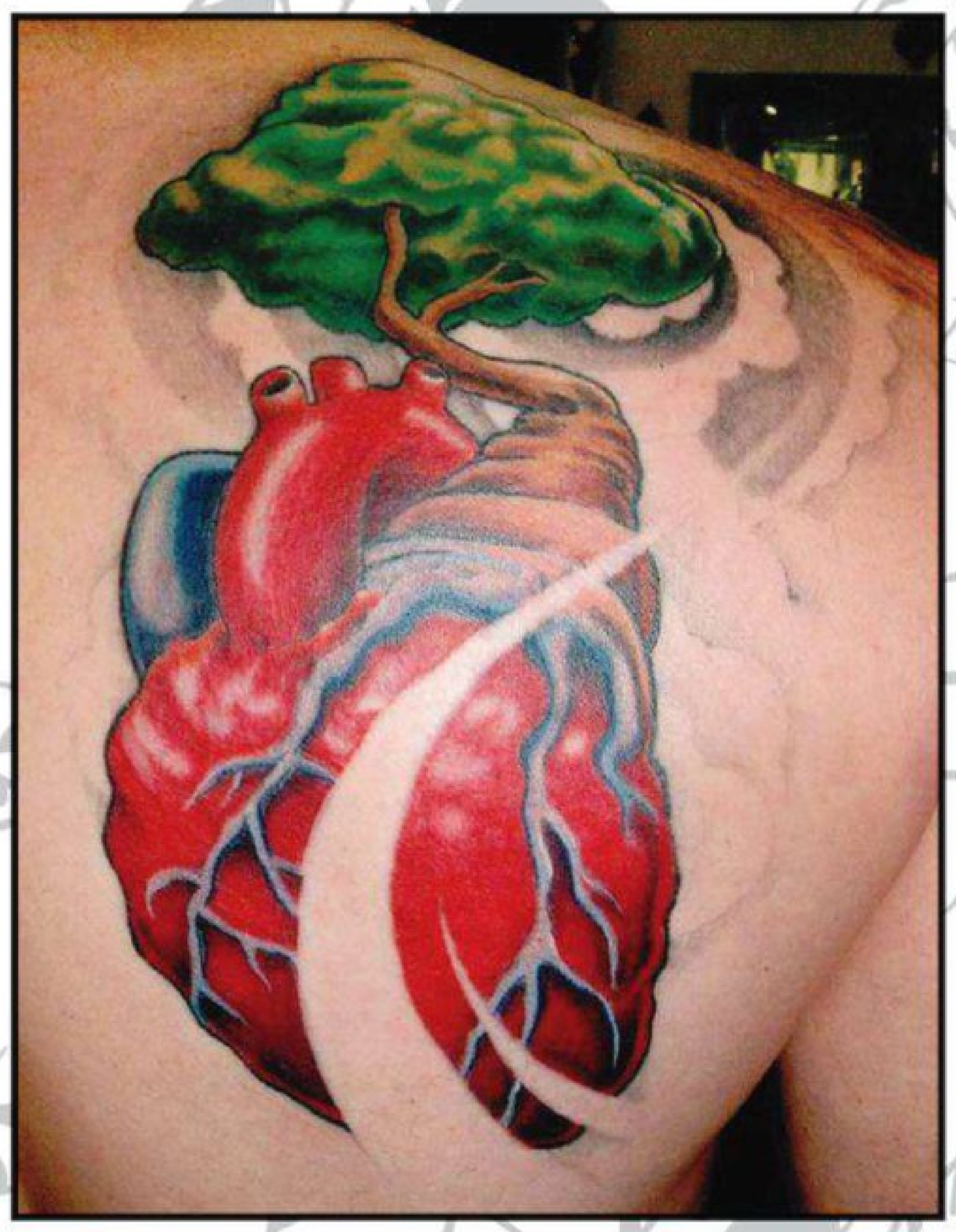
Robbie, Baldy's Tattoo Studio
Radcliff, KY



Scott Dowdy, Tattoo Consortium
Bryan, TX



Pat Cohen, Twisted Ink Tattoo
Cobelskill, NY



Aaron Moore, Westside Tattoo
Colorado Springs, CO



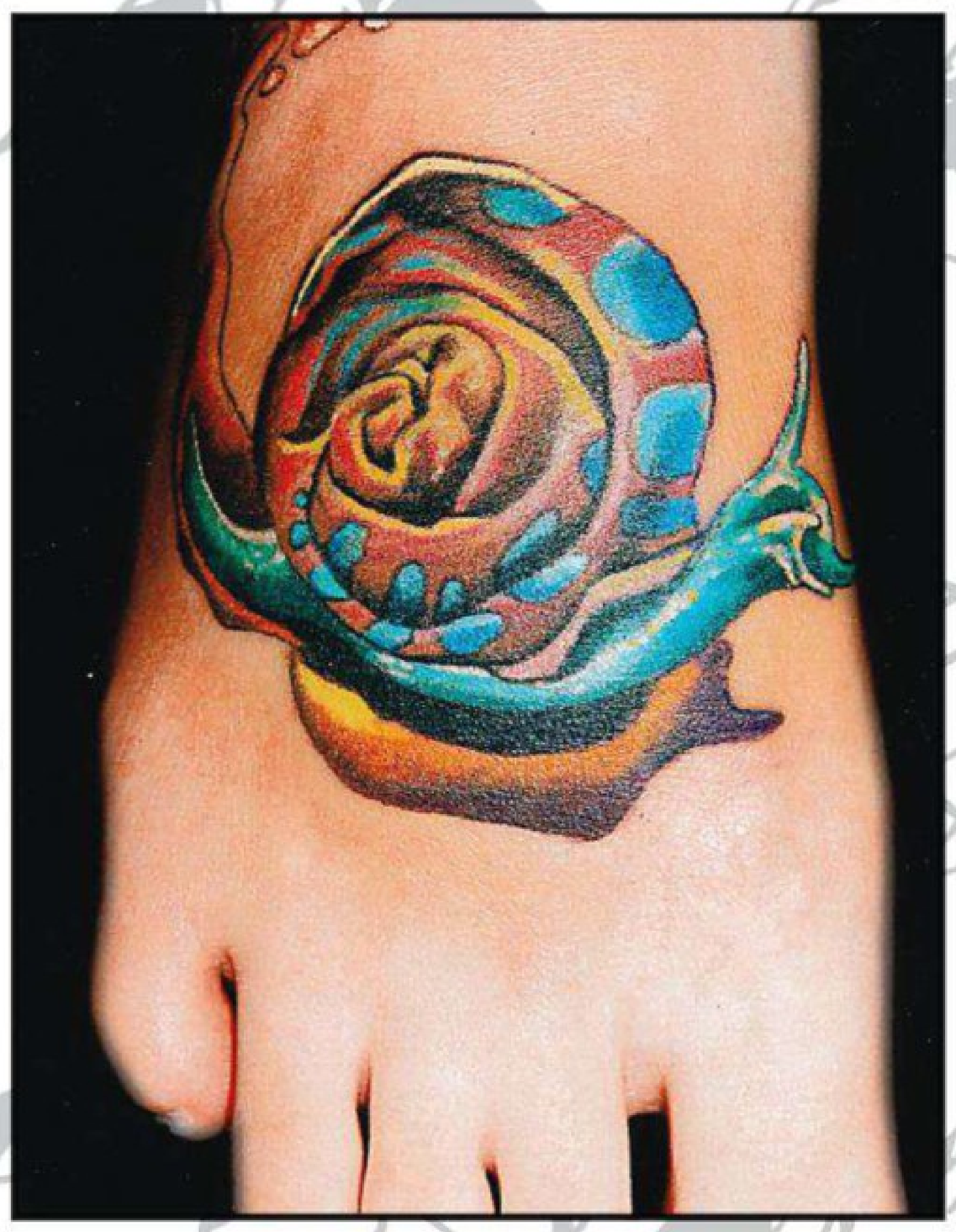
Paul Acker, Deep Six
Philadelphia, PA



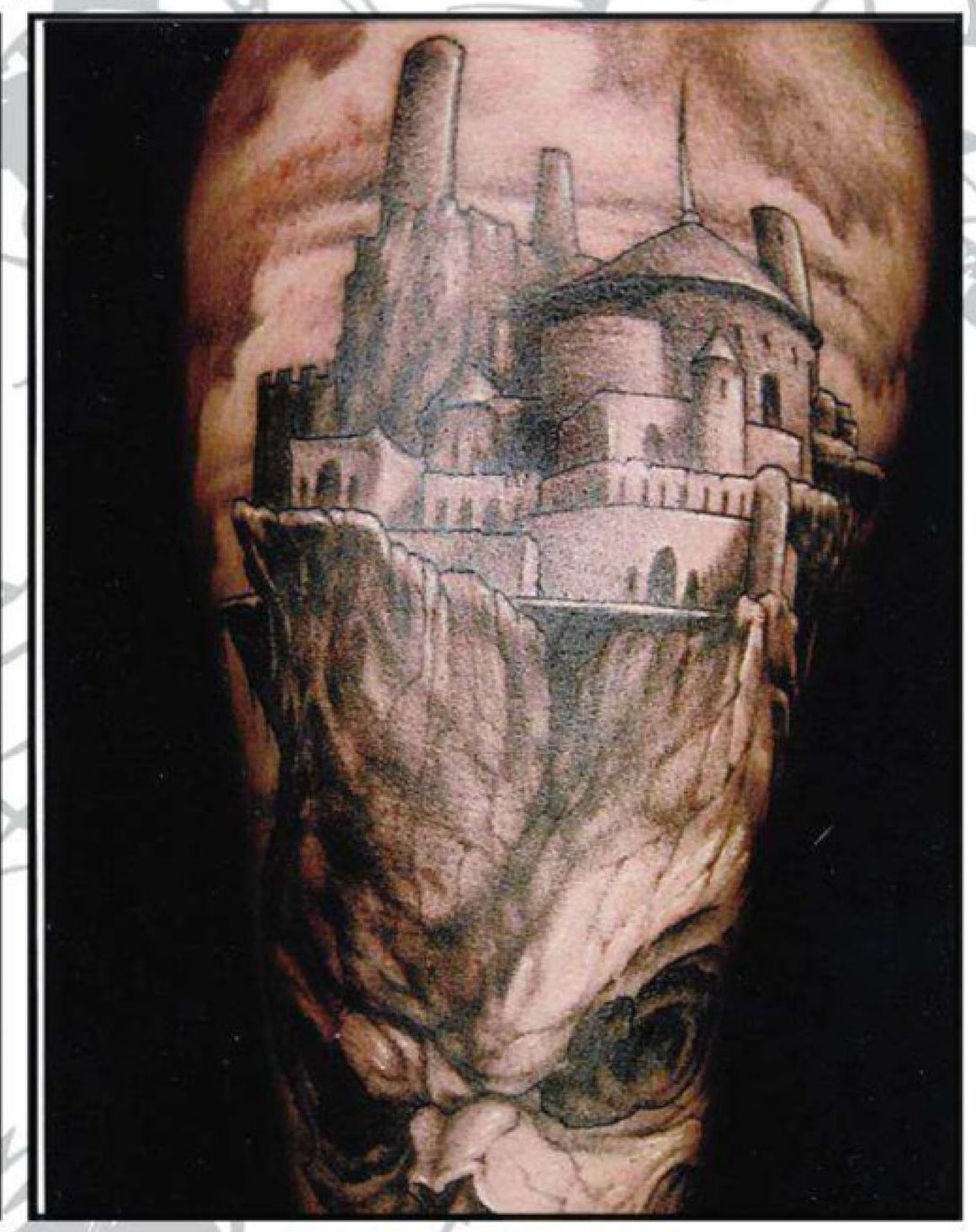
Jay Paranich, Full Coverage Tattoo Studio
Woodbury Hts, NJ

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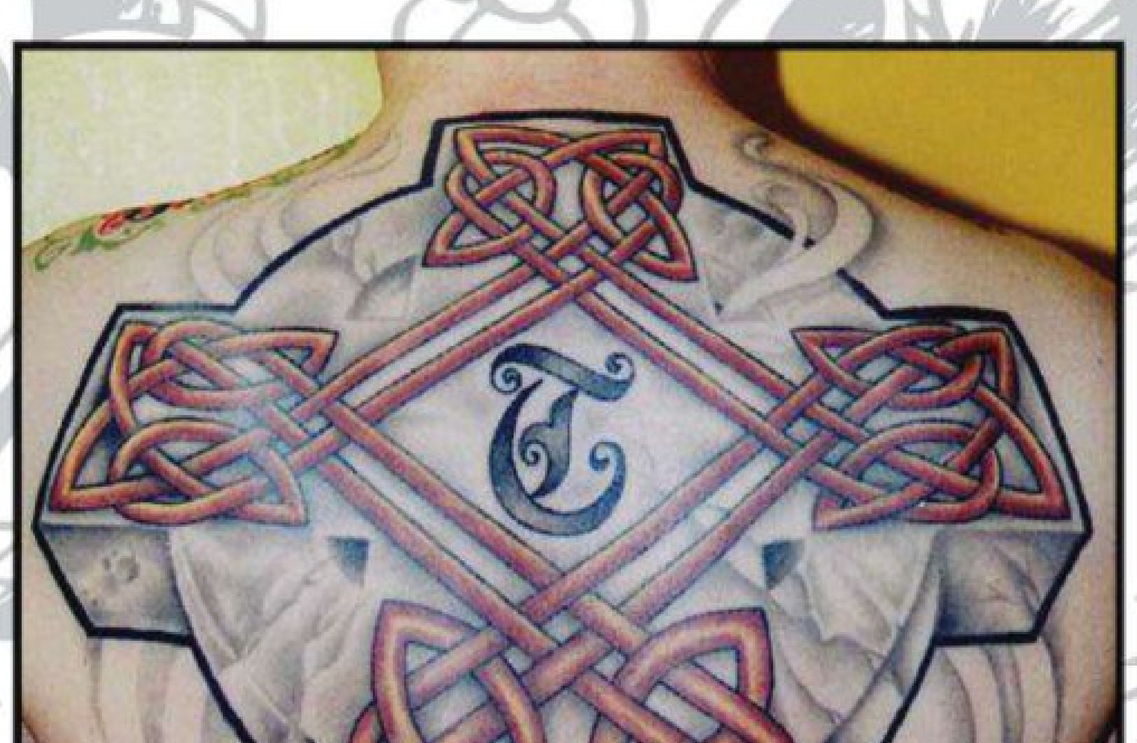
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David Page, Club Tattoo
Mesa, AZ



Pastor, Deep Six
Philadelphia, PA



Greg Drake, Splash of Color
East Lansing, MI



Seth Campbell, Mass Tattoos
Warcester, MA

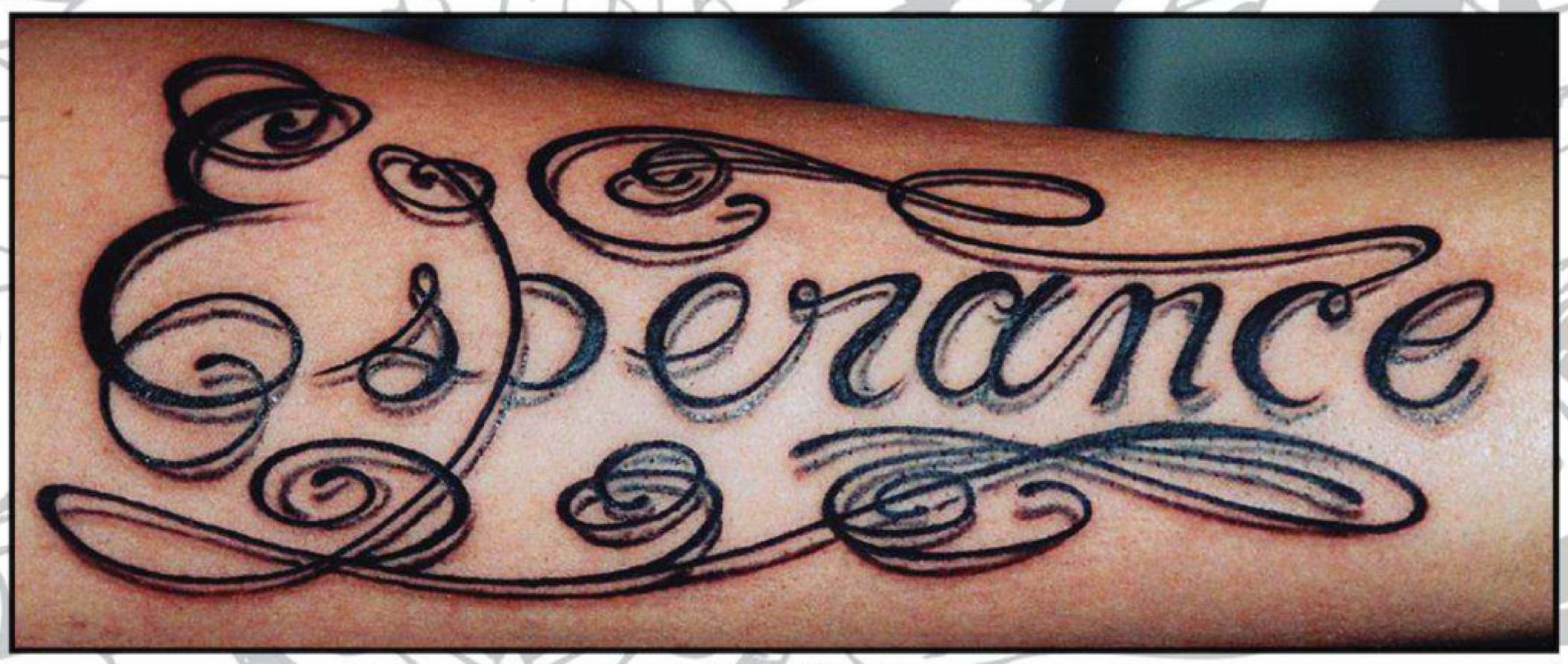
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Nate Esteras, 1st Amendment
Murrieta, CA



Seth Davidson, Ancient Art Tattoo
Charleston, WV



Christophe, Graff Ink
Macon, France

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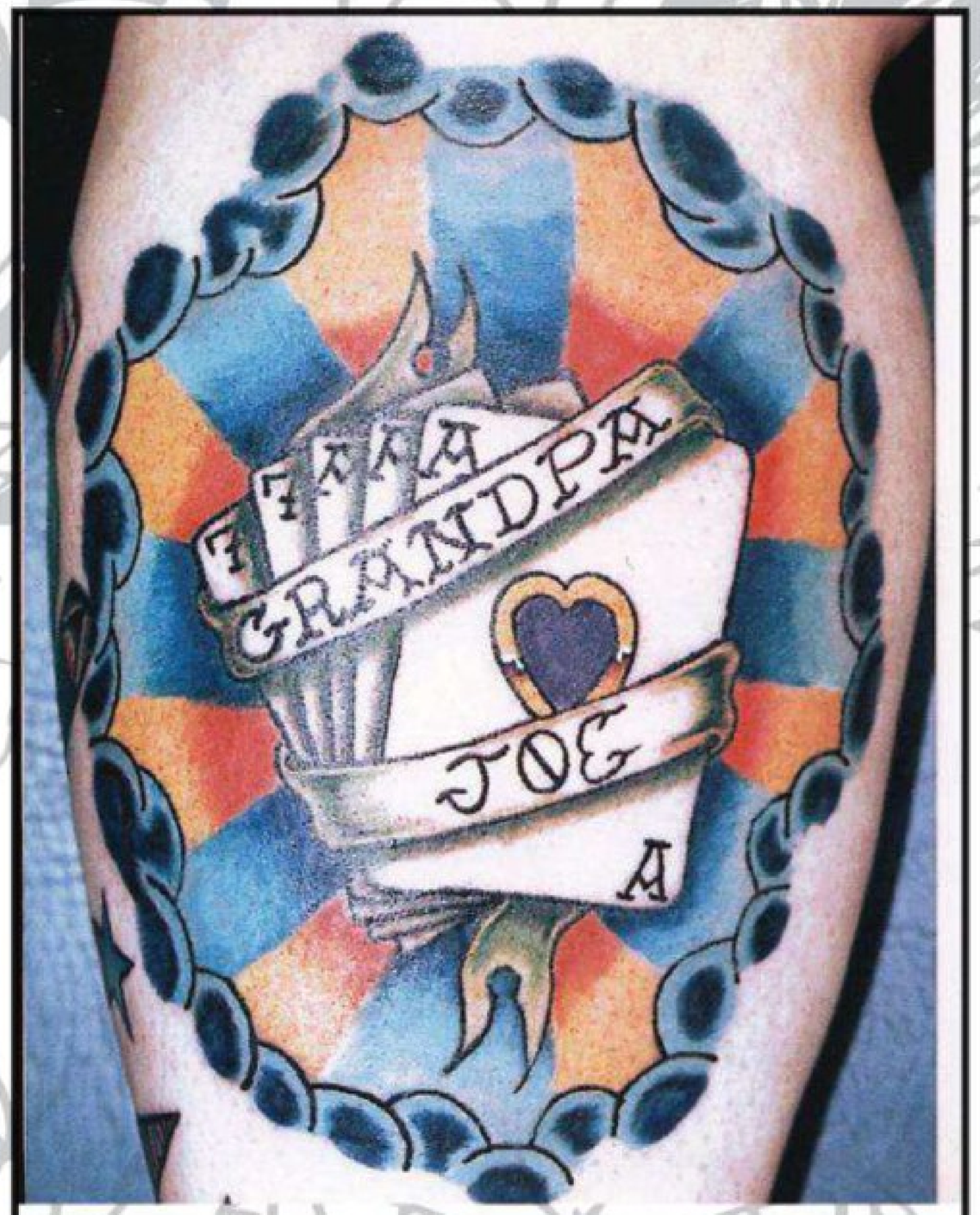
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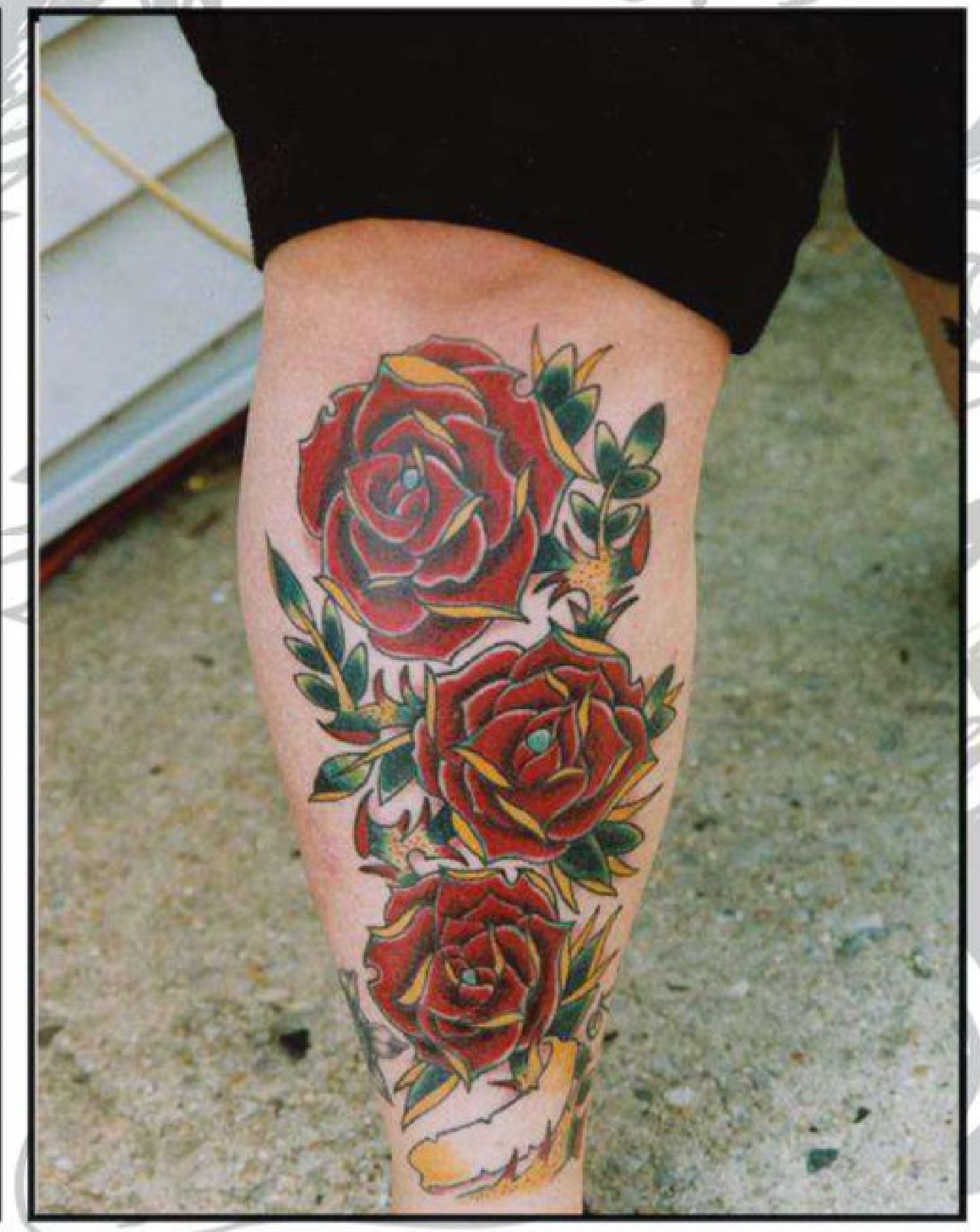
Isreal Caine, Spider Monkey Tattoo
Olympia, WA



Jessica Vann, Forbidden Body Art
Portland, OR

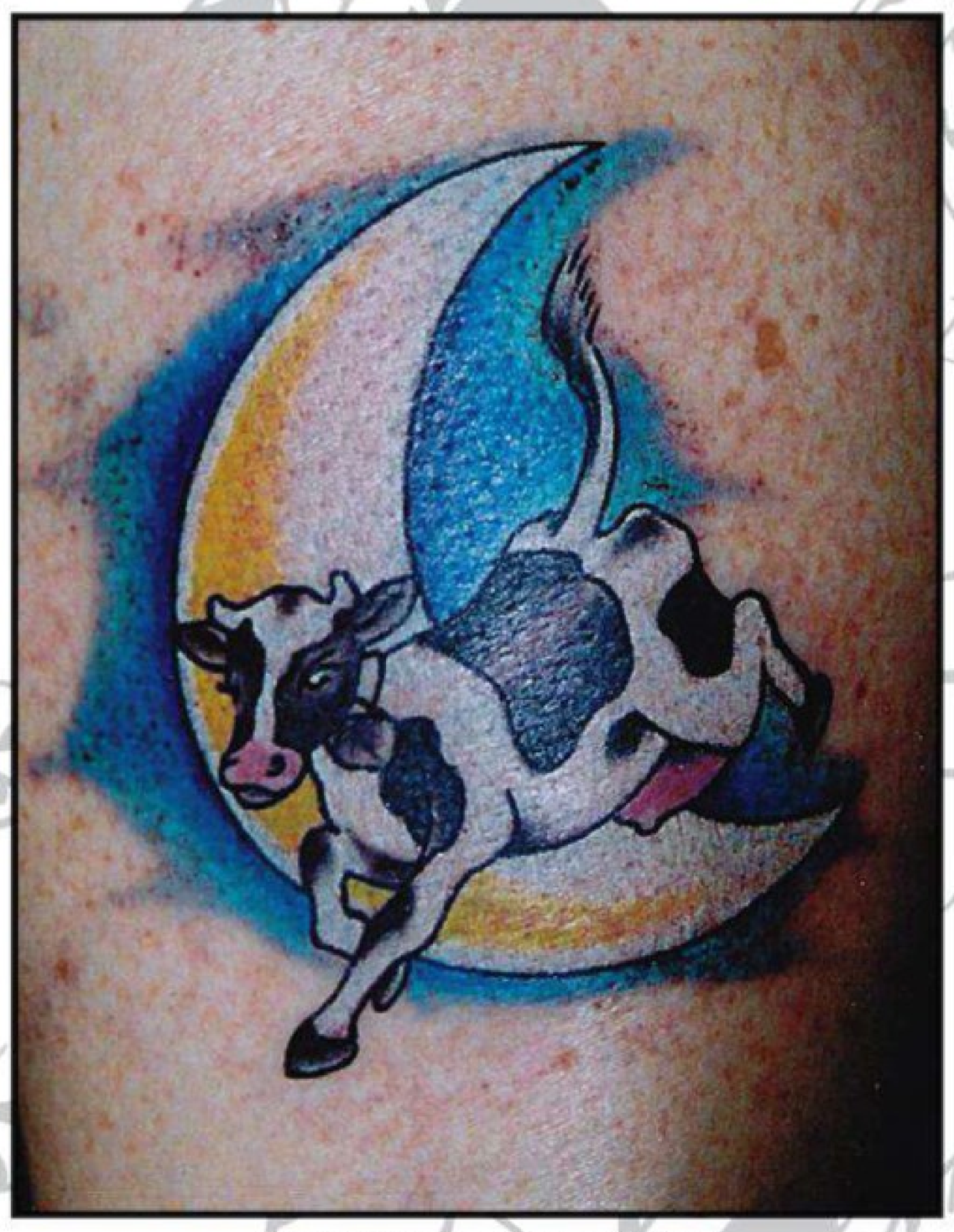


John Ferrell, Love & Hate Tattoo
Phoenix, AZ



Tommy 2-Tone, Bayside Ink Tattoo
Beachwood, NJ

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Sean Stewart, Fat Cat Tattoo
Pine Grove, NJ



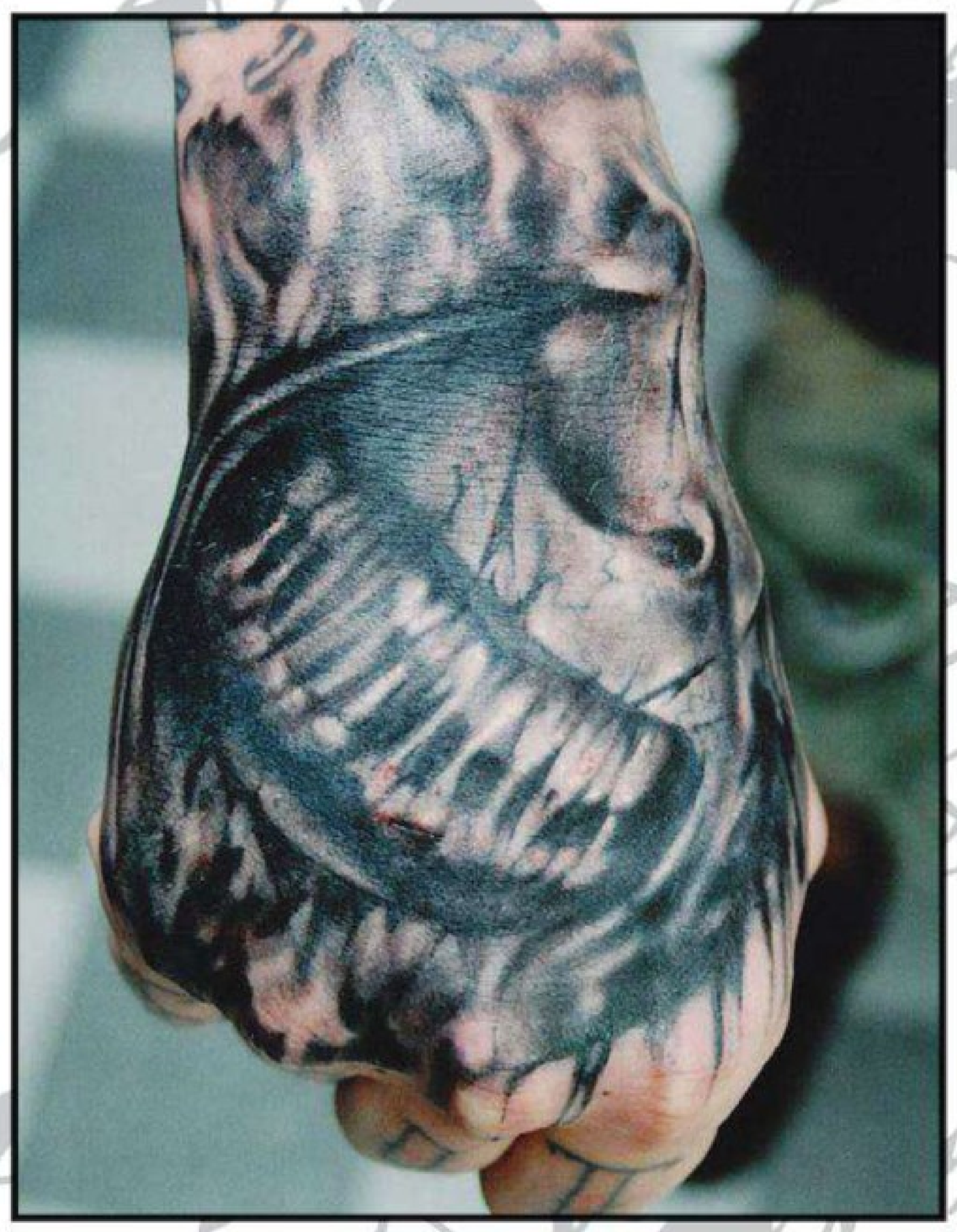
Chris "51" Rohaley, Area 51
Springfield, OR



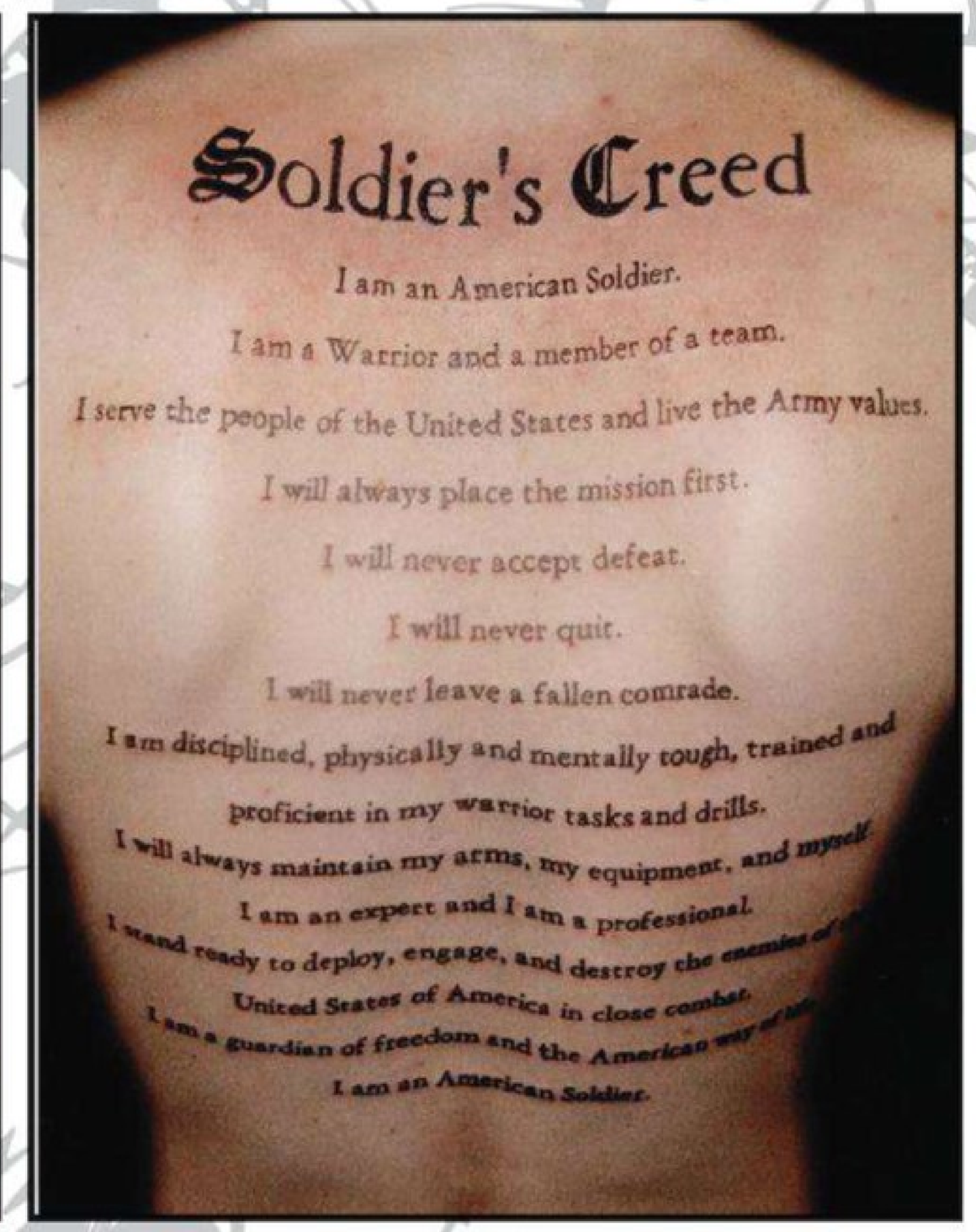
Troy Couture, A Body of Art
Pagosa Springs, CO



Damien Rodriguez, Superstition Tattoo
Massapequa, NY



Josh White, Forbidden Tattoo Studio
Norwalk, OH



Pete Ferrel, Eternal Ink Tattoos
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Tony Carey, Hold Fast Tattoo
Prescott, AZ



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Shaun Murphy, Smokin' Guns Tattoo
Beckley, WV



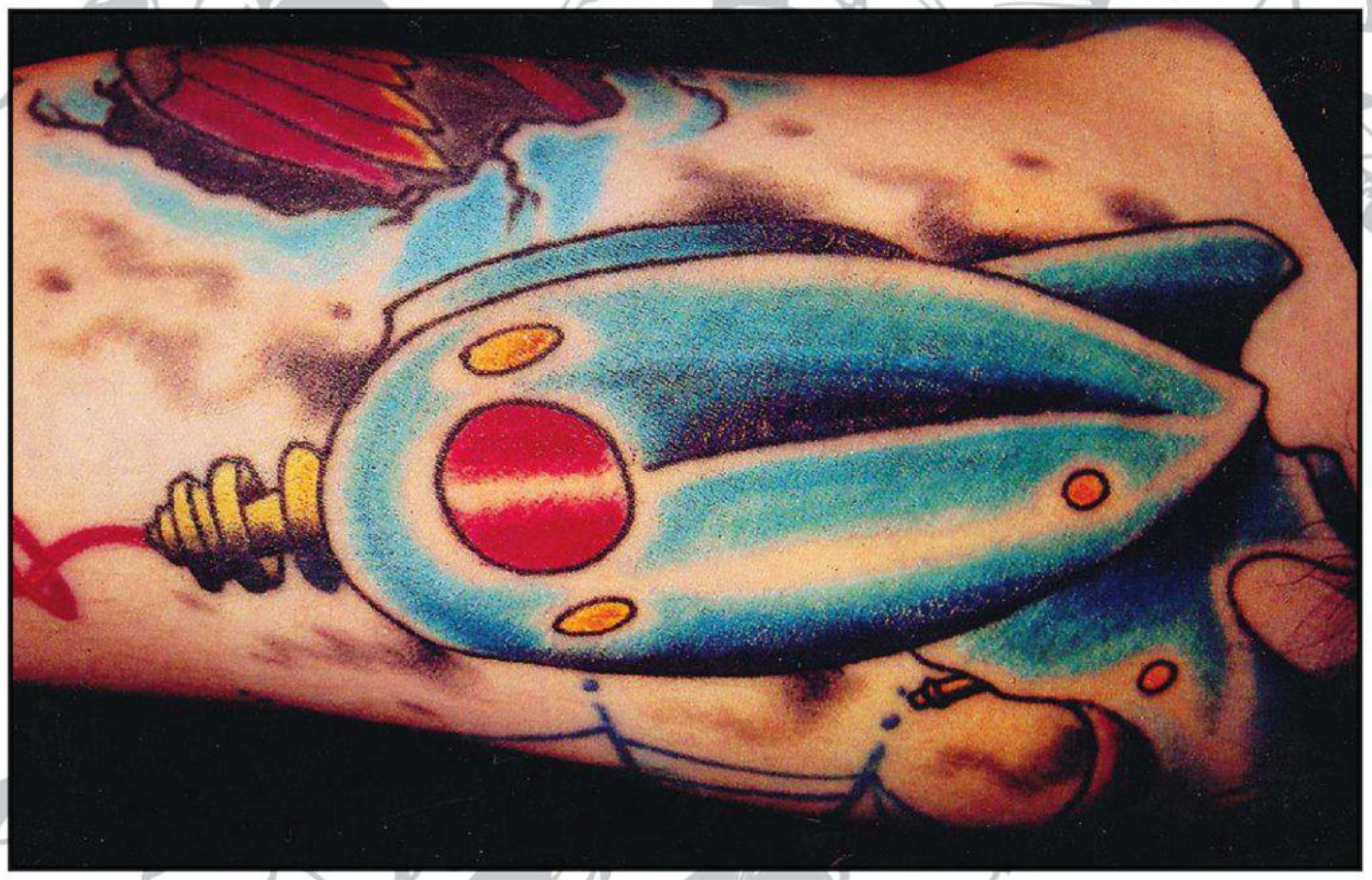
Johnny, Juli Moons Studio
Lynn, MA



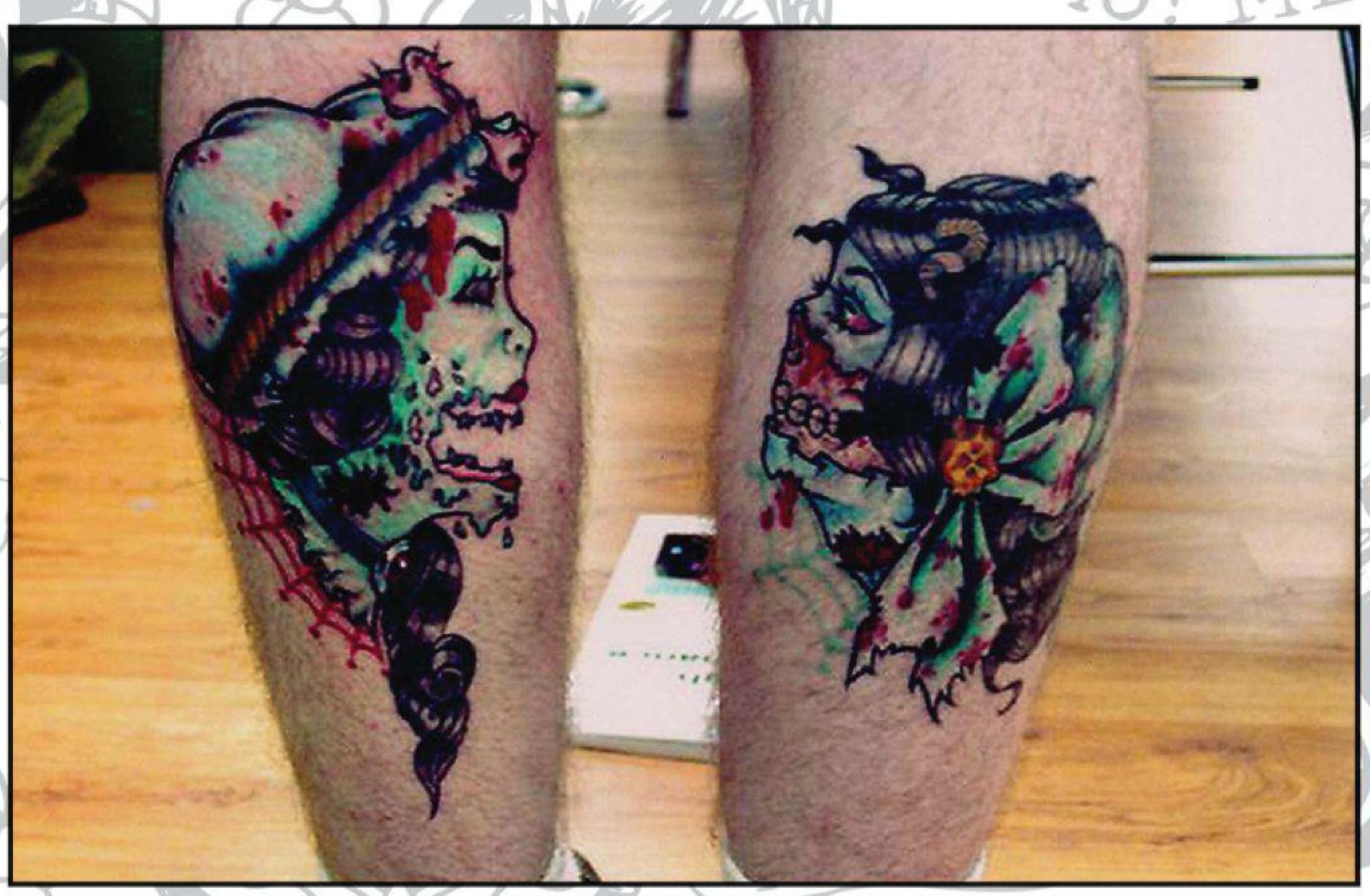
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Shreveport, LA

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Brian Wren, Third Eye Tattoo
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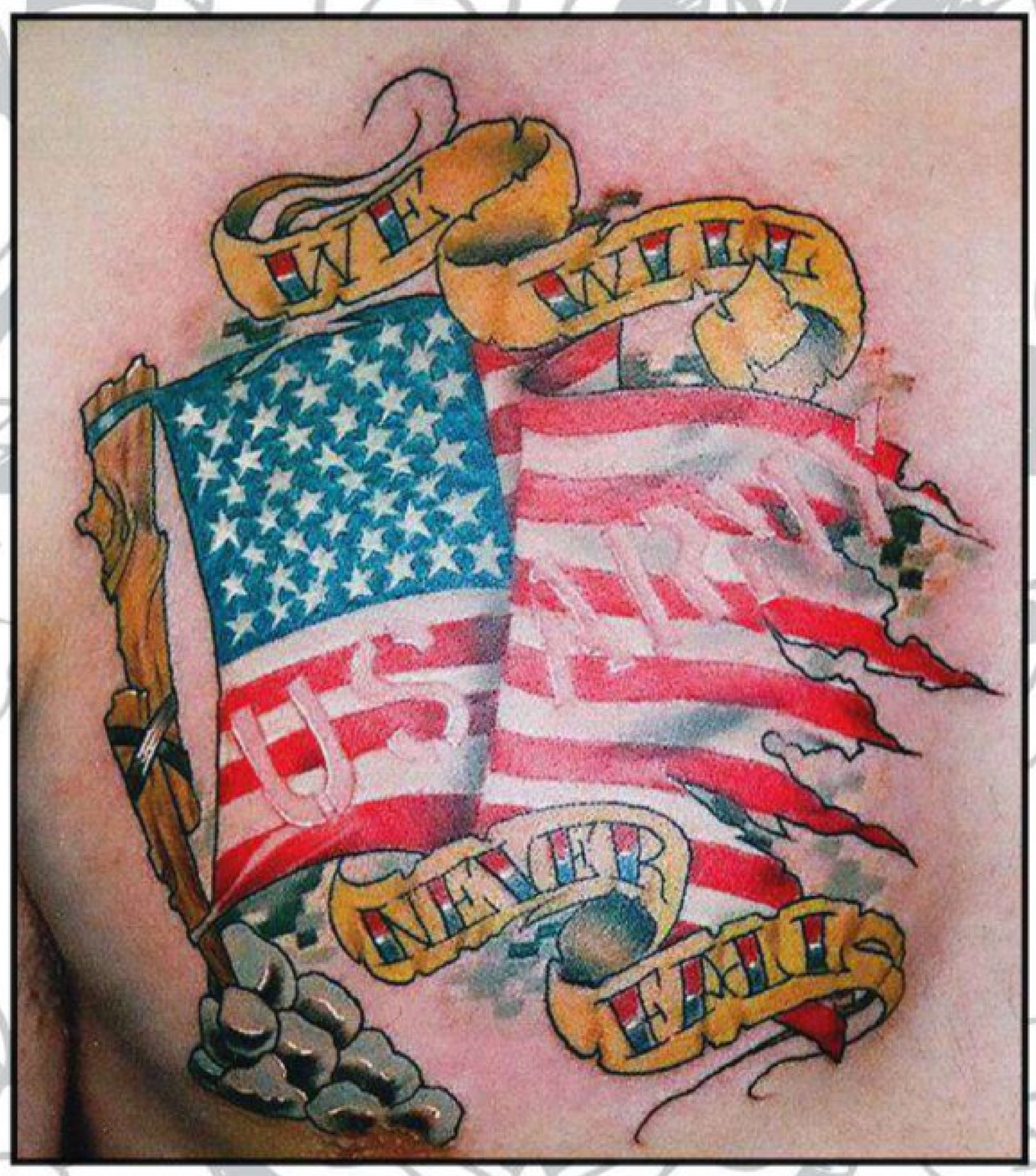
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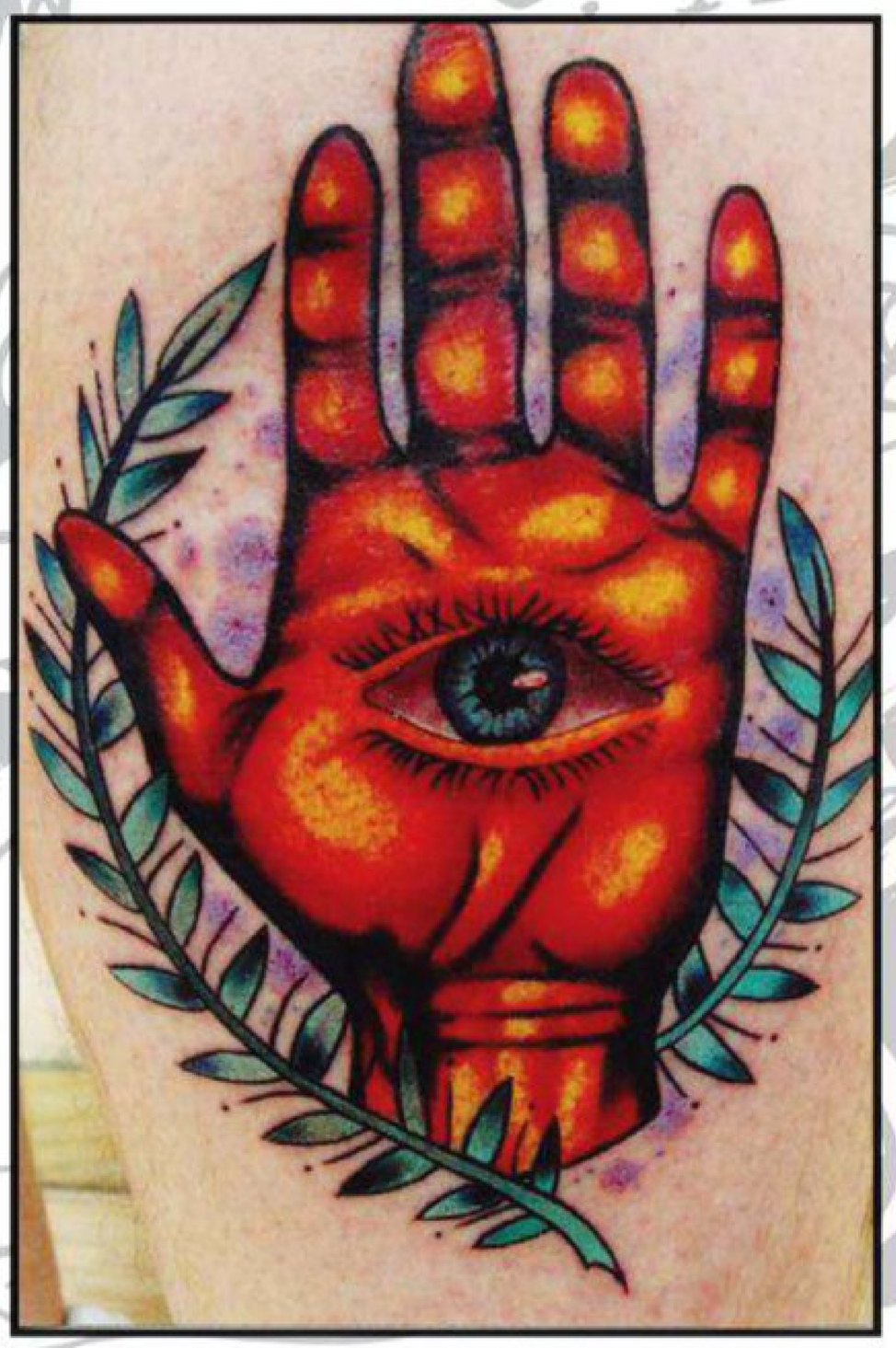
Damien Robertson, Perfect Image
Alberta, Canada



Hector "Tito" Velez, Euphoria Ink
Roselle, NJ



Rooster, Prick Tattoos
San Antonio, TX



Bill Brugger, Big Guns Tattoo
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Matthew Gibeau, Spider Monkey Tattoo
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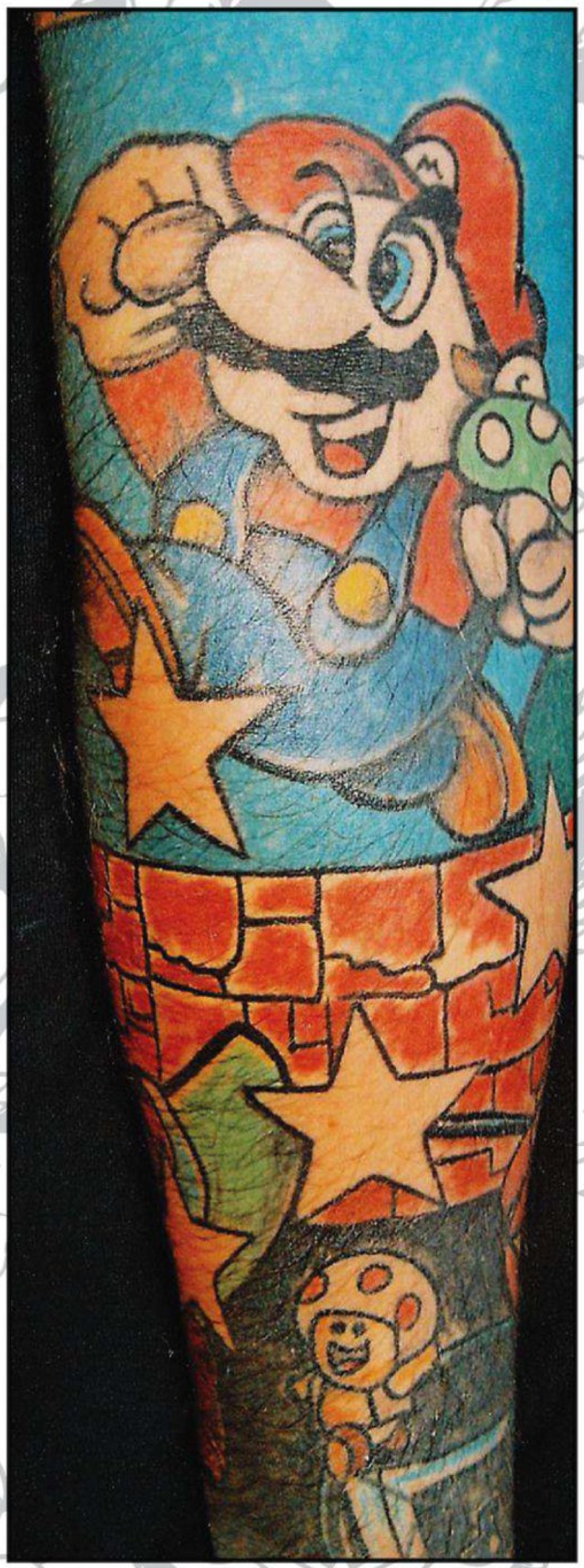


Lexi Rex, Spider Monkey Tattoo
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Chance Gomez, Red Handed Tattoo Gallery
Las Vegas, NV

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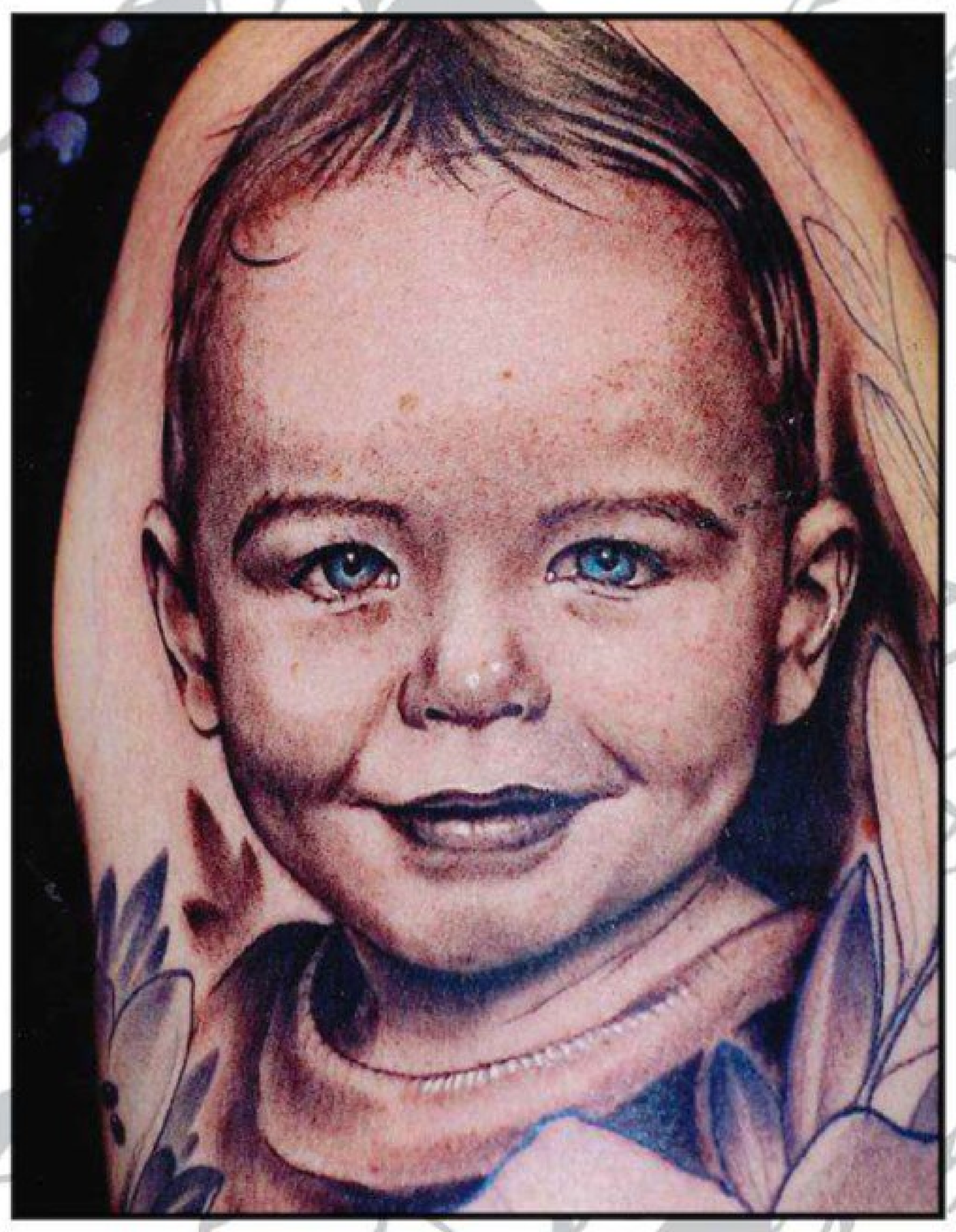
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Chris Flanagan, 603 Tattoo Co.
Salem, NH

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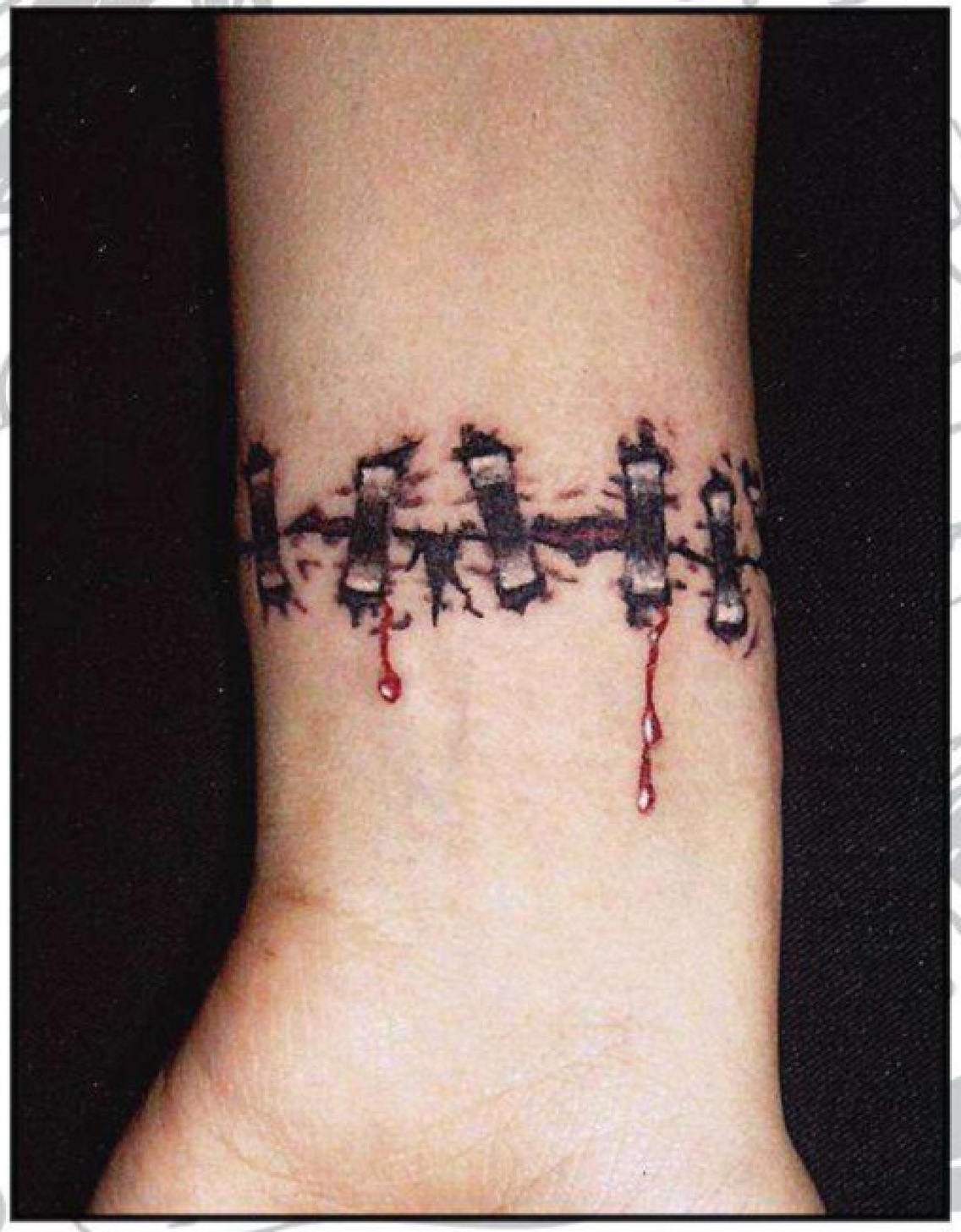
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Glen Decker, Studio Ten Tattoos
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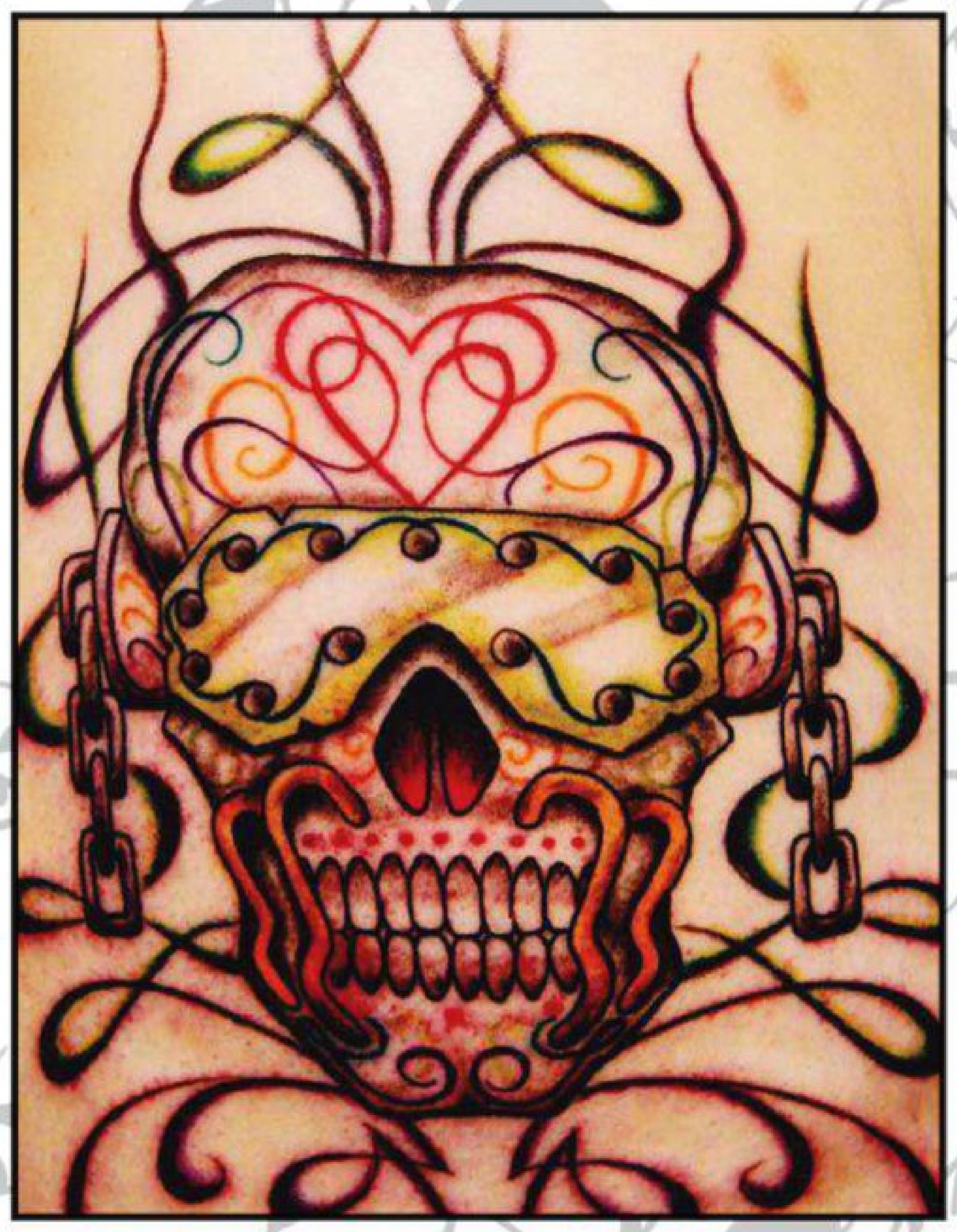


Paul M. Puder, Next Generation Tattoo
Woodbridge, VA

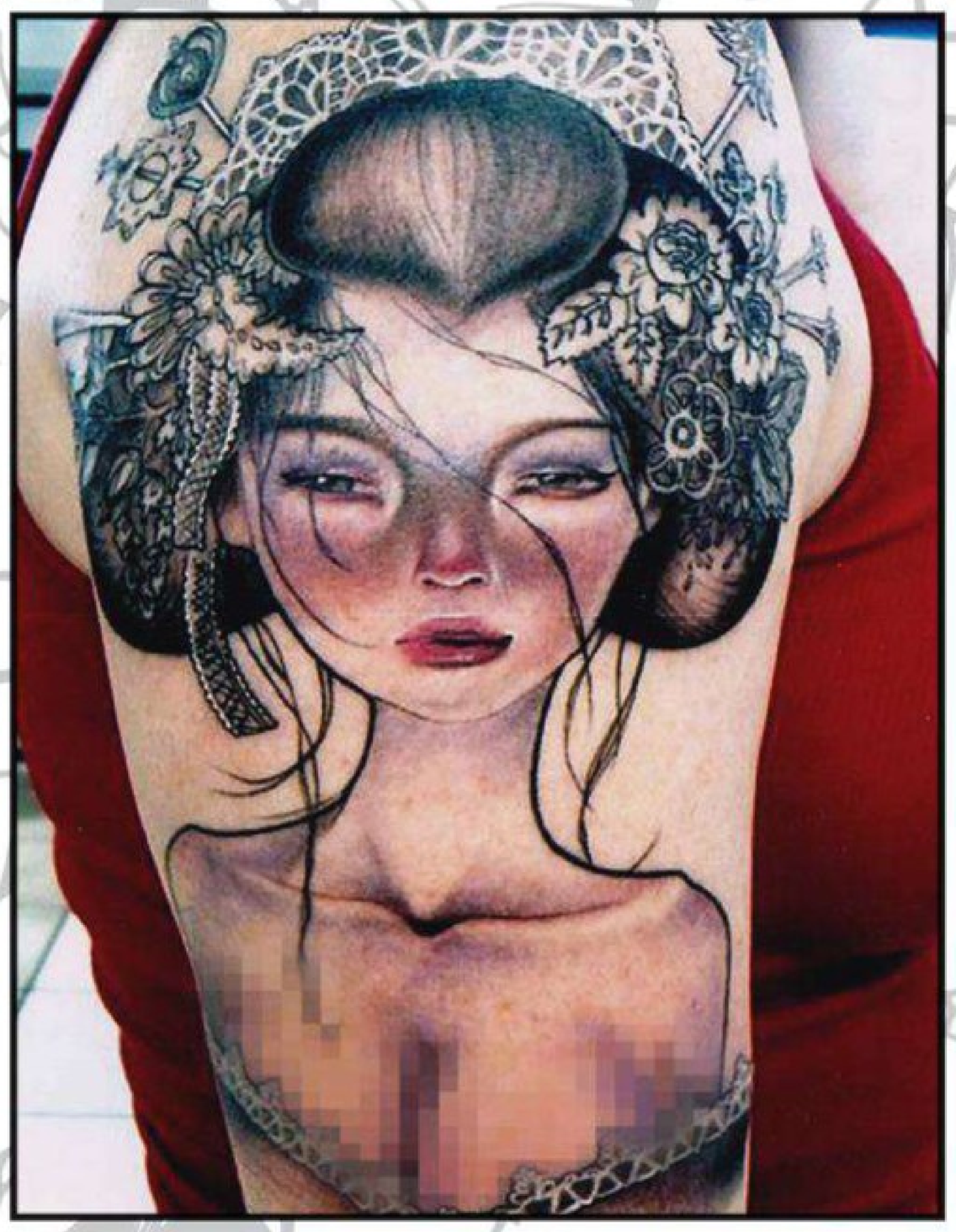


Christopher Depinto, Shotsie's Tattoo
Wayne, NJ

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Traci Hancock, Boomtown Tattoo
Martinsburg, WV



Leif, Studio 8 Tattoos
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Scott Olive, Oddity Tattoo
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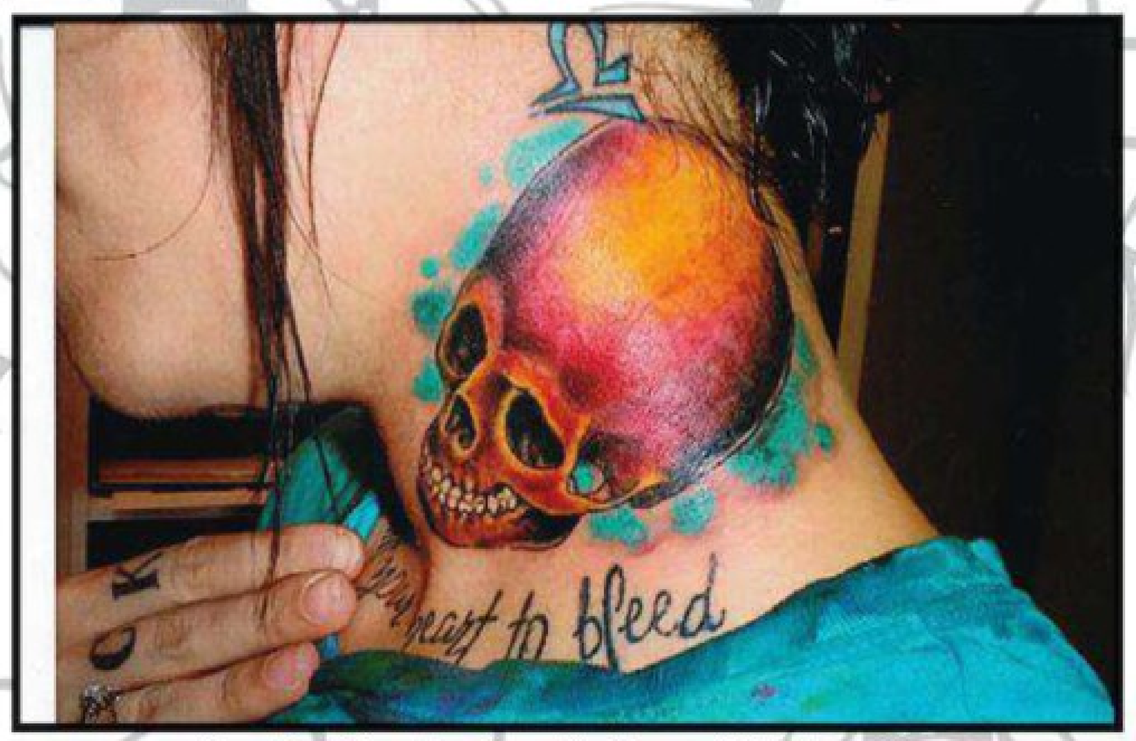


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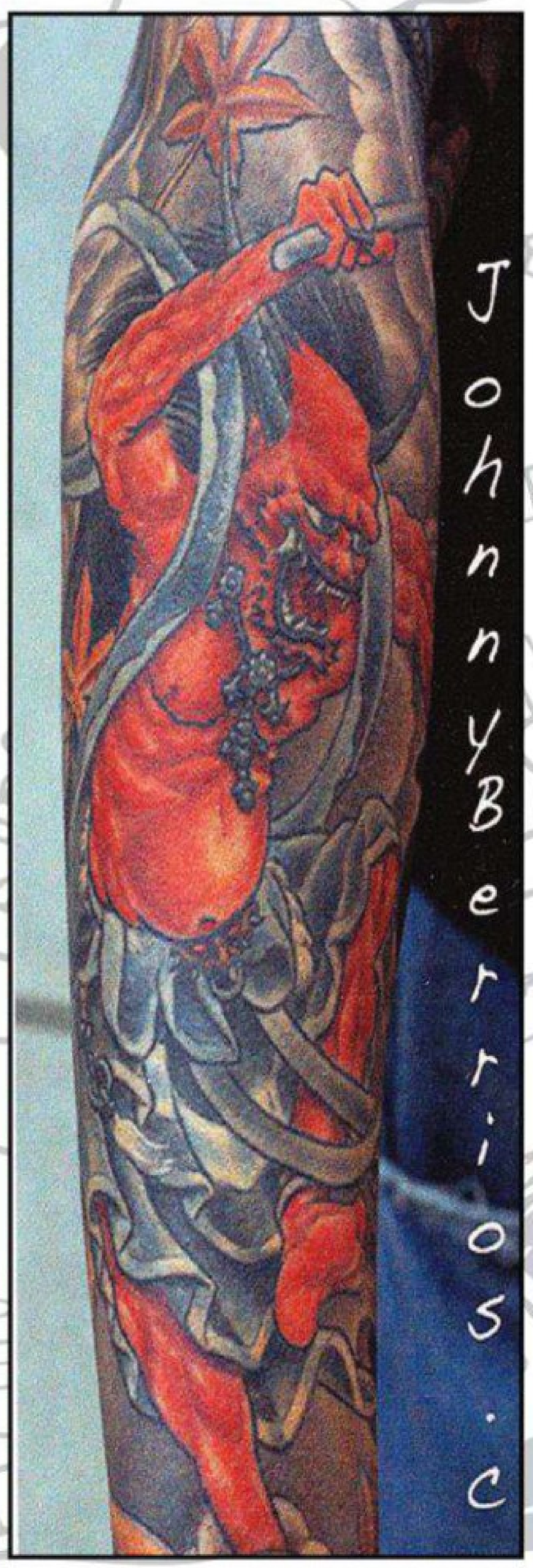
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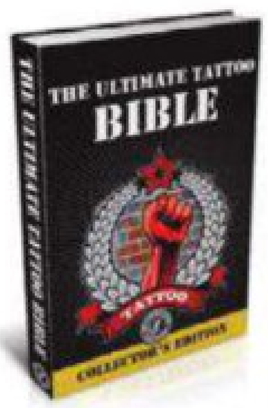
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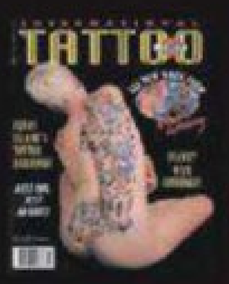
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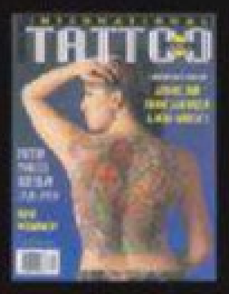
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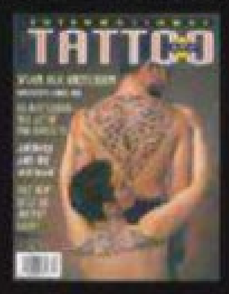
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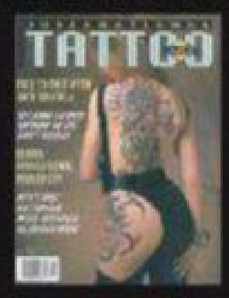
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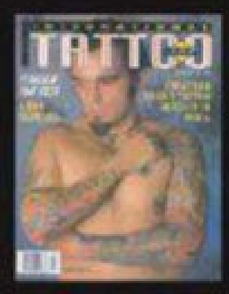
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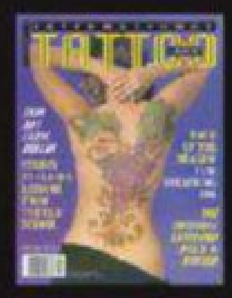
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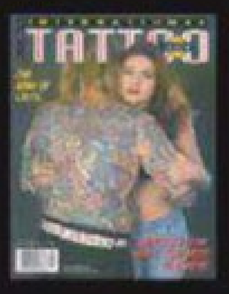
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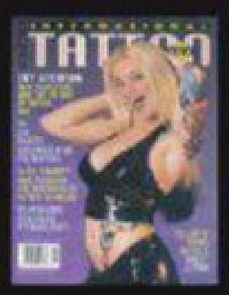
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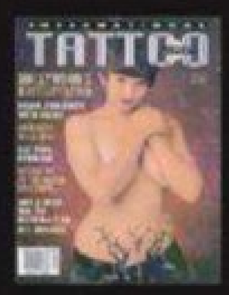
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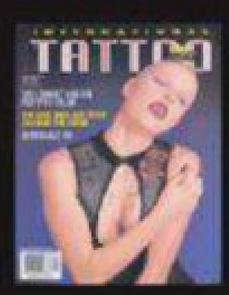
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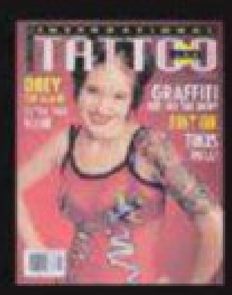
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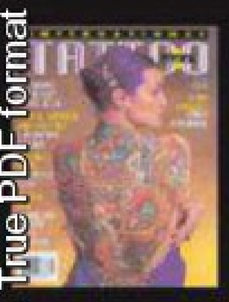
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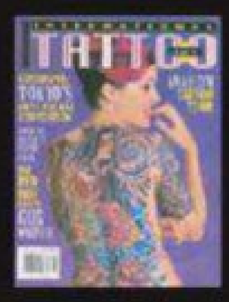
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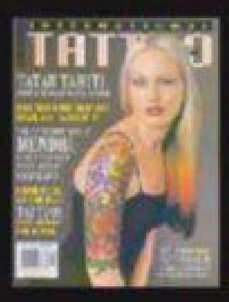
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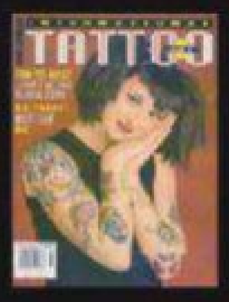
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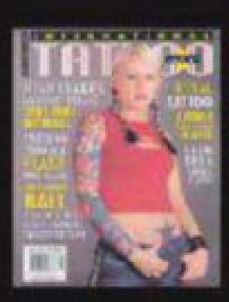
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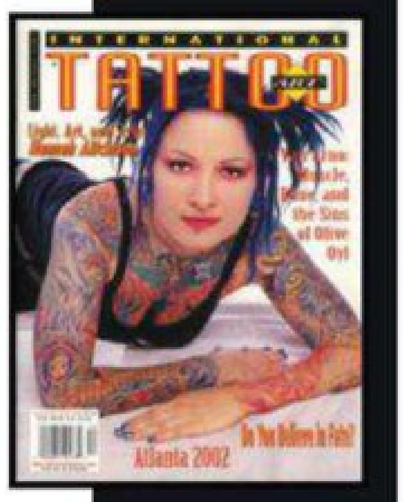
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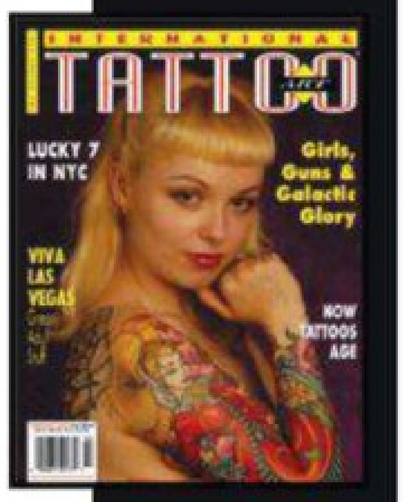








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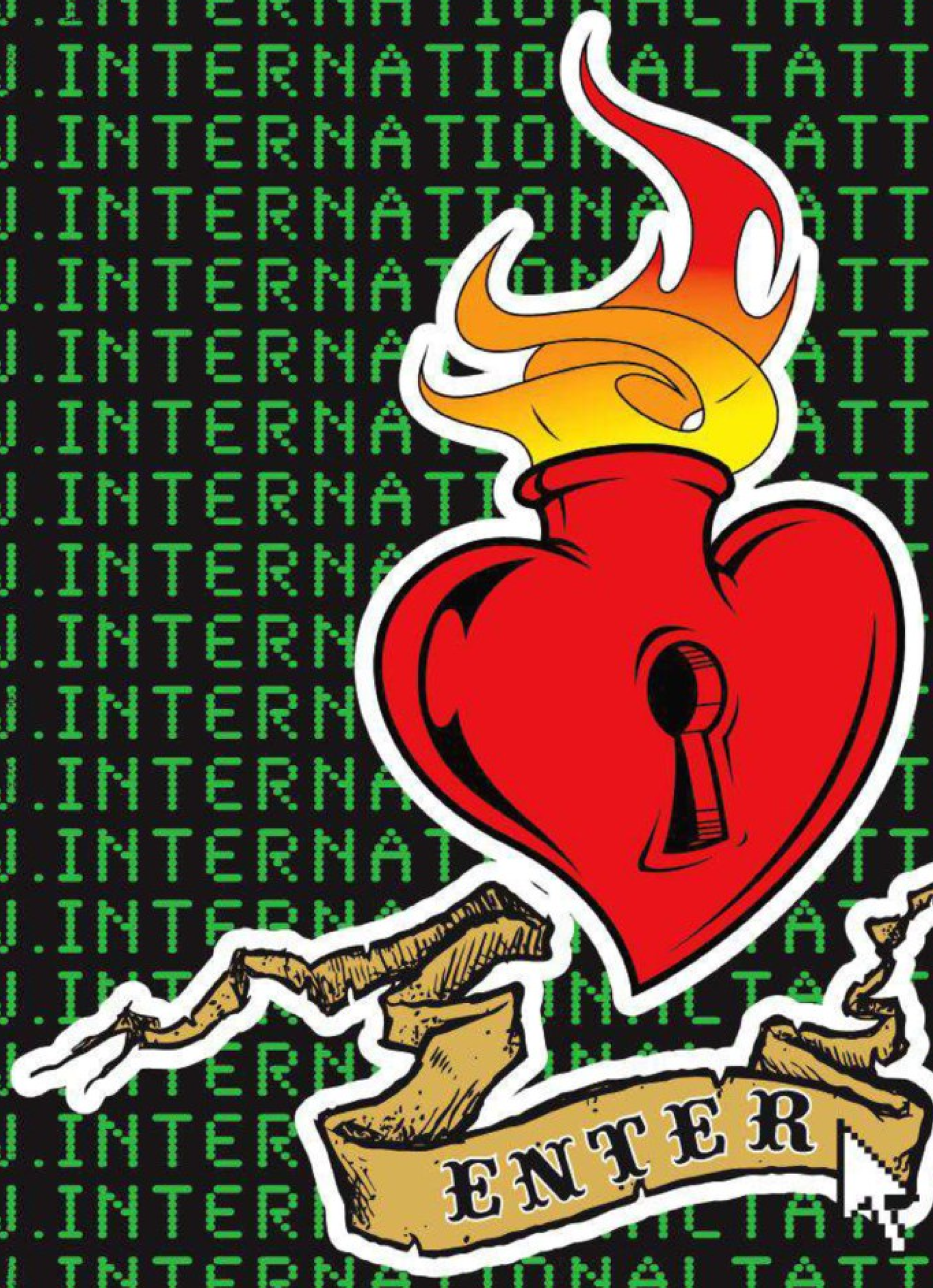
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